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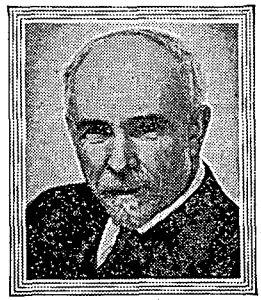

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FANTASTIC UNIVERSE

DEC. 1957
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FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, Vol. 8, No. 6. Published monthly by King-Size Publications, Inc., 320 Fifth Ave., N. Y. 1, N. Y. Subscription, 12 issues $3.75, single copies 35c. Foreign postage extra. Reentered as second-class matter at the post office, New York, N. Y. Additional entry, Holyoke, Mass. The characters in this magazine are entirely ficitious and have no relation to any persons living or dead. Copyright, 1957, by King-Size Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. December, 1957. Printed in U. S. A.

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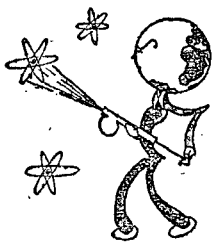

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bear trap

by ALAN E. NOURSE

The man's meteoric rise as a peacemaker in a nation tired by the long years of war made the truth even more shocking.

THE HUGE troop transport plane eased down through the rainy drizzle enshrouding New York International Airport at about five o'clock in the evening. Tom Shandor glanced sourly through the port at the wet landing strip, saw the dim landing lights reflected in the steaming puddles. On an adjacent field he could see the rows and rows of jet fighters, wings up in the foggy rain, poised like ridiculous birds in the darkness. With a sigh he ripped the sheet of paper from the small, battered portable typewriter on his lap, and zipped the machine up in its slicker case.

Across the troop hold the soldiers were beginning to stir, yawning, shifting their packs, collecting their gear. Occasionally they stared at Shandor as if he were totally alien to their midst, and he shivered a little as he collected the sheets of paper scattered on the deck around him, checked the date, 27 September, 1982, and rolled them up to fit in the slim round mailing container. Ten minutes later he was shouldering his way through the crowd of khaki-clad men, scowling up

Dr. Alan E. Nourse, who when last heard of was vacationing in Alaska —and probably gathering material for SF or Mystery stories set against this background—is the author of many mystery and science fiction stories including MARTYR, the lead novel in our January 1957 issue.

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at the sky, his nondescript fedora jammed down over his eyes to keep out the rain, slicker collar pulled up about his ears. At the gangway he stopped before a tired-looking lieutenant and flashed the small fluorescent card in his palm. "Public Information Board."

The officer nodded wearily and gave his coat and typewriter a cursory check, then motioned him on. He strode across the wet field, scowling at the fog, toward the dimmed-out waiting rooms.

He found a mailing chute, and popped the mailing tube down the slot as if he were glad to be rid of it. Into the speaker he said: "Special Delivery. PIB business. It goes to press tonight."

The female voice from the speaker said something, and the red "clear" signal blinked. Shandor slipped off his hat and shook it, then stopped at a coffee machine and extracted a cup of steaming stuff from the bottom after trying the coin three times. Finally he walked across the room to an empty video booth, and sank down into the chair with an exhausted sigh. Flipping a switch, he waited several minutes for an operator to appear. He gave her a number, and then said, "Let's scramble it, please."

"Official?"

He showed her the card, and settled back, his whole body tired. He was a tall man, rather slender, with flat, bland features punctuated only by blond caret-shaped eyebrows. His grey eyes were heavy-lidded now, his mouth an expressionless line as he waited, sunk back into his coat with a long-cultivated air of lifeless boredom. He watched the screen without interest as it bleeped a time or two, then shifted into the familiar scrambled-image pattern. After a moment he muttered the Public Information Board audio-code words, and saw the screen even out into the clear image of a large heavyset man at a desk.

"Hart," said Shandor. "Story's on its way. I just dropped it from the Airport a minute ago, with a rush tag on it. You should have it for the morning editions."

The big man in the screen blinked, and his heavy face lit up. "The story on the Rocket Project?"

Shandor nodded. "The whole scoop. I'm going home now." He started his hand for the cutoff switch.

"Wait a minute—" Hart picked up a pencil and fiddled with it for a moment. He glanced over his shoulder, and his voice dropped a little. "Is the line scrambled?"

Shandor nodded.

"What's the scoop, boy? How's Rocket Project coming?"

Shandor grinned wryly. "Read the report, daddy. Everything's just ducky, of course—it's all ready for

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press. You've got the story, why should I repeat it?"

Hart scowled impatiently. "No, no— I mean the *scoop*. The real stuff. How's the Project going?"

"Not so hot." Shandor's face was weary. "Material cutoff is holding them up something awful. Among other things. The sabotage has really fouled up the west coast trains, and shipments haven't been coming through on schedule. You know—they ask for one thing, and get the wrong weight, or their supplier is out of material, or something goes wrong. And there's personnel trouble, too—too much direction and too little work. It's beginning to look as if they'll never get going. And now it looks like there's going to be another administration shakeup, and you know what that means—"

Hart nodded thoughtfully. "They'd better get hopping," he muttered. "The conference in Berlin is on the skids—it could be hours now." He looked up. "But you got the story rigged all right?"

Shandor's face flattened in distaste. "Sure, sure. You know me, Hart. Anything to keep the people happy. Everything's running as smooth as satin, work going fine, expect a test run in a month, and we should be on the moon in half a year, more or less, maybe, we hope—the usual swill. I'll be in to work out the war stories in the morning. Right now I'm for bed."

He snapped off the video before Hart could interrupt, and started for the door. The rain hit him, as he stepped out, with a wave of cold wet depression, but a cab slid up to the curb before him and he stepped in. Sinking back he tried to relax, to get his stomach to stop complaining, but he couldn't fight the feeling of almost physical illness sweeping over him. He closed his eyes and sank back, trying to drive the ever-plaguing thoughts from his mind, trying to focus on something pleasant, almost hoping that his long-starved conscience might give a final gasp or two and die altogether. But deep in his mind he knew that his screaming conscience was almost the only thing that held him together.

Lies, he thought to himself bitterly. White lies, black lies, whoppers—you c o u l d take your c h o i c e. There should be a flaming neon sign flashing across the sky, telling all people: "Public Information Board, Fabrication Corporation, fabricating of all lies neatly and expeditiously done." He squirmed, feeling the rebellion grow in his mind. Propaganda, they called it. A nice word, such a very handy word, covering a multitude of seething pots. PIB was the grand clearing house, the last censor of censors, and he, Tom Shandor, was the Chief Fabricator and Purveyor of Lies.

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He shook his head, trying to get a breath of clean air in the damp cab. Sometimes he wondered where it was leading, where it would finally end up, what would happen if the people ever really learned, or ever listened to the clever ones who tried to sneak the truth into print somewhere. But people couldn't be told the truth, they had to be coddled, urged, pushed along. They had to be kept somehow happy, somehow hopeful, they had to be kept whipped up to fever pitch, because the long, long years of war and near war had exhausted them, wearied them beyond natural resiliency. No, they had to be spiked, urged and goaded—what would happen if they learned?

He sighed. No one, it seemed, could do it as well as he. No one could take a story of bitter diplomatic fighting in Berlin and simmer it down to a public-palatable "peaceful and progressive meeting;" no one could quite so skillfully reduce the bloody fighting in India to a mild "enemy losses topping American losses twenty to one, and our boys are fighting staunchly, bravely,"— No one could write out the lies quite so neatly, so smoothly as Tom Shandor—

The cab swung in to his house, and he stepped out, tipped the driver, and walked up the walk, eager for the warm dry room. Coffee helped sometimes when he felt this way, but other things helped even more. He didn't even take his coat off before mixing and downing a stiff rye-and-ginger, and he was almost forgetting his unhappy conscience by the time the video began blinking.

He flipped the receiver switch and sat down groggily, blinked at John Hart's heavy face as it materialized on the screen. Hart's eyes were wide, his voice tight and nervous as he leaned forward. "You'd better get into the office pronto," he said, his eyes bright. "You've *really* got a story to work on now—"

Shandor blinked. "The War—"

Hart took a deep breath. "Worse," he said. "David Ingersoll is dead."

Tom Shandor shouldered his way through the crowd of men in the anteroom, and went into the inner office. Closing the door behind him coolly, he faced the man at the desk, and threw a thumb over his shoulder. "Who're the goons?" He growled. "You haven't released a story yet—?"

John Hart sighed, his pinkish face drawn. "The press. I don't know how they got the word—there hasn't been a word released, but—" he shrugged and motioned Shandor to a seat. "You know how it goes."

Shandor sat down, his face

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blank, eyeing the Information chief woodenly. The room was silent for a moment, a tense, anticipatory silence. Then Hart said: "The Rocket story was great, Tommy. A real writing job. You've got the touch, when it comes to a ticklish news release—"

Shandor allowed an expression of distaste to cross his face. He looked at the chubby man across the desk and felt the distaste deepen and crystallize. John Hart's face was round, with little lines going up from the eyes, an almost grotesque, burlesque-comic face that belied the icy practical nature of the man behind it. A thoroughly distasteful face, Shandor thought. Finally he said, "The story, John. On Ingersoll. Let's have it, straight out."

Hart shrugged his stocky shoulders, spreading his hands. "Ingersoll's dead," he said. "That's all there is to it. He's stone, cold dead."

"But he can't be dead!" roared Shandor, his face flushed. "We just can't *afford* to have him dead—"

Hart looked up wearily. "Look, I didn't kill him. He went home from the White House this evening, apparently sound enough, after a long, stiff, nasty conference with the President. Ingersoll wanted to go to Berlin and call a showdown at the International conference there, and he had a policy brawl with the President, and the President, wouldn't let him go, sent an undersecretary instead, and threatened to kick Ingersoll out of the cabinet unless he quieted down. Ingersoll got home at 4:30, collapsed at 5:00, and he was dead before the doctor arrived. Cerebral hemorrhage, pretty straightforward. Ingersoll's been killing himself for years—he knew it, and everyone else in Washington knew it. It was bound to happen sooner or later."

"He was trying to prevent a war," said Shandor dully, "and he was all by himself. Nobody else wanted to stop it, nobody that mattered, at any rate. Only the people didn't want war, and who ever listens to them? Ingersoll got the people behind him, so they gave him a couple of Nobel Peace Prizes, and made him Secretary of State, and then cut his throat every time he tried to do anything. No wonder he's dead—"

Hart shrugged again, eloquently indifferent. "So he was a nice guy, he wanted to prevent a war. As far as I'm concerned, he was a pain in the neck, the way he was forever jumping down Information's throat, but he's dead now, he isn't around any more—" His eyes narrowed sharply. "The important thing, Tommy, is that the people won't like it that he's dead. They trusted him. He's been the people's Golden Boy, their last-ditch hope for

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peace. If they think their last chance is gone with his death, they're going to be mad. They won't like it, and there'll be hell to pay—"

Shandor lit a smoke with trembling fingers, his eyes smouldering. "So the people have to be eased out of the picture," he said flatly. "They've got to get the story so they won't be so angry—"

Hart nodded, grinning. "They've got to have a real story, Tommy. Big, blown up, what a great guy he was, defender of the peace, greatest, most influential man America has turned out since the half-century—you know what they lap up, the usual garbage, only on a slightly higher plane. They've got to think that he's really saved them, that he's turned over the reins to other hands just as trustworthy as his—you can give the president a big hand there—they've got to think his work is the basis of our present foreign policy—can't you see the implications? It's got to be spread on with a trowel, laid on skillfully—"

Shandor's face flushed deep red, and he ground the stub of his smoke out viciously. "I'm sick of this stuff, Hart," he exploded. "I'm sick of you, and I'm sick of this whole rotten setup, this business of writing reams and reams of lies just to keep things under control. Ingersoll was a great man, a *really* great man, and he was *wasted*, thrown away. He worked to make peace, and he got laughed at. He hasn't done a thing—because he couldn't. Everything he has tried has been useless, wasted. *That's* the truth—why not tell that to the people?"

Hart stared. "Get hold of yourself," he snapped. "You know your job. There's a story to write. The life of David Ingersoll. It has to go down smooth." His dark eyes shifted to his hands, and back sharply to Shandor. "A propagandist has to write it, Tommy—an ace propagandist. You're the only one I know that could do the job."

"Not me," said Shandor flatly, standing up. "Count me out. I'm through with this, as of now. Get yourself some other whipping boy. Ingersoll was one man the people could trust. And he was one man I could never face. I'm not good enough for him to spit on, and I'm not going to sell him down the river now that he's dead."

With a little sigh John Hart reached into the desk. "That's very odd," he said softly. "Because Ingersoll left a message for you—"

Shandor snapped about, eyes wide. "Message—?"

The chubby man handed him a small envelope. "Apparently he wrote that a long time ago. Told his daughter to send it to Public Information Board immediately in event of his death. Read it."

Shandor unfolded the thin

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paper, and blinked unbelieving:

In event of my death during the next few months, a certain amount of biographical writing will be inevitable. It is my express wish that this writing, in whatever form it may take, be done by Mr. Thomas L. Shandor, staff writer of the Federal Public Information Board.

I believe that man alone is qualified to handle this assignment.

(Signed) David P. Ingersoll
Secretary of State,
United States of America.
4 June, 1981

Shandor read the message a second time, then folded it carefully and placed it in his pocket, his forehead creased. "I suppose you want the story to be big," he said dully.

Hart's eyes gleamed a moment of triumph. "As big as you can make it," he said eagerly. "Don't spare time or effort, Tommy. You'll be relieved of all assignments until you have it done—if you'll take it."

"Oh, yes," said Shandor softly. "I'll take it."

He landed the small PIB 'copter on an airstrip in the outskirts of Georgetown, haggled with Security officials for a few moments, and grabbed an old weatherbeaten cab, giving the address of the Ingersoll estate as he settled back in the cushions. A small radio was set inside the door; he snapped it on, fiddled with the dial until he found a PIB news report. And as he listened he felt his heart sink lower and lower, and the old familiar feeling of dirtiness swept over him, the feeling of being a part in an enormous, overpowering scheme of corruption and degradation. The Berlin conference was reaching a common meeting ground, the report said, with Russian, Chinese, and American officials making the first real progress in the week of talks. Hope rising for an early armistice on the Indian front. Suddenly he hunched forward, blinking in surprise as the announcer continued the broadcast: "The Secretary of State, David Ingersoll, was stricken with a slight head cold this evening on the eve of his departure for the Berlin Conference, and was advised to postpone the trip temporarily. John Harris Darby, first undersecretary, was dispatched in his place. Mr. Ingersoll expressed confidence that Mr. Darby would be able to handle the talks as well as himself, in view of the optimistic trend in Berlin last night—"

Shandor snapped the radio off viciously, a roar of disgust rising in his throat, cut off just in time. Lies, lies, lies. Some people *knew* they were lies—what could they really think? People like David Ingersoll's wife—

Carefully he reined in his

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thoughts, channelled them. He had called the Ingersoll home the night before, announcing his arrival this morning—

The taxi ground up a gravelled driveway, stopped before an Army jeep at the iron grilled gateway. A Security Officer flipped a cigarette onto the ground, shaking his head. "Can't go in, Secretary's orders."

Shandor stepped from the cab, briefcase under his arm. He showed his card, scowled when the officer continued shaking his head. "Orders say *nobody*—"

"Look, blockhead," Shandor grated. "If you want to hang by your toes, I can put through a special check-line to Washington to confirm my appointment here. I'll also recommend you for the salt mines."

The officer growled, "Wise guy," and shuffled into the guard shack. Minutes later he appeared again, jerked his thumb toward the estate. "Take off," he said. "See that you check here at the gate before you leave."

He was admitted to the huge house by a stone-faced butler, who led him through a maze of corridors into a huge dining room. Morning sunlight gleamed through a glassed-in wall, and Shandor stopped at the door, almost speechless.

He knew he'd seen the girl somewhere. At one of the Washington parties, or in the newspapers. Her face was unmistakable; it was the sort of face that a man never forgets once he glimpses it—thin, puckish, with wideset grey eyes that seemed both somber and secretly amused, a full, sensitive mouth, and blonde hair, exceedingly fine, cropped close about her ears. She was eating her breakfast, a rolled up newspaper by her plate, and as she looked up, her eyes were not warm. She just stared at Shandor angrily for a moment, then set down her coffee cup and threw the paper to the floor with a slam. "You're Shandor, I suppose."

Shandor looked at the paper, then back at her. "Yes, I'm Tom Shandor. But you're not Mrs. Ingersoll—"

"A profound observation. Mother isn't interested in seeing anyone this morning, particularly you." She motioned to a chair. "You can talk to me if you want to."

Shandor sank down in the proffered seat, struggling to readjust his thinking. "Well," he said finally. "I—I wasn't expecting you—" he broke into a grin— "but I should think you could help. You know what I'm trying to do —I mean, about your father. I want to write a story, and the logical place to start would be with his family—"

The girl blinked wide eyes innocently. "Why don't you start with the newspaper files?" she asked, her voice silky. "You'd find all sorts of information about daddy

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there. Pages and pages—"

"No, no— I don't want that kind of information. You're his daughter, Miss Ingersoll, you could tell me about him as a man. Something about his personal life, what sort of man he was—"

She shrugged indifferently, buttered a piece of toast, as Shandor felt most acutely the pangs of his own missed breakfast. "He got up at seven every morning," she said. "He brushed his teeth and ate breakfast. At nine o'clock the State Department called for him—"

Shandor shook his head unhappily. "No, no, that's not what I mean."

"Then perhaps you'd tell me precisely what you *do* mean?" Her voice was clipped and hard.

Shandor sighed in exasperation. "The personal angle. His likes and dislikes, how he came to formulate his views, his relationship with his wife, with you—"

"He was a kind and loving father," she said, her voice mocking. "He loved to read, he loved music—oh, yes, put that down, he was a *great* lover of music. His wife was the apple of his eye, and he tried, for all the duties of his position, to provide us with a happy home life—"

"Miss Ingersoll."

She stopped in mid-sentence, her grey eyes veiled, and shook her head slightly. "That's not what you want, either?"

Shandor stood up and walked to a window, looking out over the wide veranda. Carefully he snubbed his cigarette in an ashtray, then turned sharply to the girl. "Look. If you want to play games, I can play games too. Either you're going to help me, or you're not—it's up to you. But you forget one thing. I'm a propagandist. I might say I'm a very expert propagandist. I can tell a true story from a false one. You won't get anywhere lying to me, or evading me, and if you choose to try, we can call it off right now. You know exactly the type of information I need from you. Your father was a great man, and he rates a fair shake in the write-ups. I'm asking you to help me."

Her lips formed a sneer. "And *you're* going to give him a fair shake, I'm supposed to believe." She pointed to the newspaper. "With garbage like that? Head cold!" Her face flushed, and she turned her back angrily. "I know your writing, Mr. Shandor. I've been exposed to it for years. You've never written an honest, true story in your life, but you always want the truth to start with, don't you? I'm to give you the truth, and let you do what you want with it, is that the idea? No dice, Mr. Shandor. And you even have the gall to brag about it!"

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Shandor flushed angrily. "You're not being fair. This story is going to press straight and true, every word of it. This is one story that won't be altered."

And then she was laughing, choking, holding her sides, as the tears streamed down her cheeks. Shandor watched her, reddening, anger growing up to choke him. "I'm not joking," he snapped. "I'm breaking with the routine, do you understand? I'm through with the lies now, I'm writing this one straight."

She wiped her eyes and looked at him, bitter lines under her smile. "You couldn't do it," she said, still laughing. "You're a fool to think so. You could write it, and you'd be out of a job so fast you wouldn't know what hit you. But you'd never get it into print. And you know it. You'd never even get the story to the inside offices."

Shandor stared at her. "That's what you think," he said slowly. "This story will get to the press if it kills me."

The girl looked up at him, eyes wide, incredulous. "You *mean* that, don't you?"

"I never meant anything more in my life."

She looked at him, wonderingly, motioned him to the table, a faraway look in her eyes. "Have some coffee," she said, and then turned to him, her eyes wide with excitement. The sneer was gone from her face, the coldness and hostility, and her eyes were pleading. "If there were some way to do it, if you really meant what you said, if you'd really *do* it—give people a true story—"

Shandor's voice was low. "I told you, I'm sick of this mill. There's something wrong with this country, something wrong with the world. There's a rottenness in it, and your father was fighting to cut out the rottenness. This story is going to be straight, and it's going to be printed if I get shot for treason. And it could split things wide open at the seams."

She sat down at the table. Her lower lip trembled, and her voice was tense with excitement. "Let's get out of here," she said. "Let's go someplace where we can talk—"

They found a quiet place off the business section in Washington, one of the newer places with the small closed booths, catering to people weary of eavesdropping and overheard conversations. Shandor ordered beers, then lit a smoke and leaned back facing Ann Ingersoll. It occurred to him that she was exceptionally lovely, but he was almost frightened by the look on her face, the suppressed excitement, the cold, bitter lines about her mouth. Incongruously, the thought crossed his mind that he'd

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hate to have this woman against him. She looked as though she would be capable of more than he'd care to tangle with. For all her lovely face there was an edge of thin ice to her smile, a razor-sharp, dangerous quality that made him curiously uncomfortable. But now she was nervous, withdrawing a cigarette from his pack with trembling fingers, fumbling with his lighter until he struck a match for her. "Now," he said. "Why the secrecy?"

She glanced at the closed door to the booth. "Mother would kill me if she knew I was helping you. She hates you, and she hates the Public Information Board. I think dad hated you, too."

Shandor took the folded letter from his pocket. "Then what do you think of this?" he asked softly. "Doesn't this strike you a little odd?"

She read Ingersoll's letter carefully, then looked up at Tom, her eyes wide with surprise. "So this is what that note was. This doesn't wash, Tom."

"You're telling me it doesn't wash. Notice the wording. 'I believe that man alone is qualified to handle this assignment.' Why me? And of all things, why me *alone?* He knew my job, and he fought me and the *PIB* every step of his career. Why a note like this?"

She looked up at him. "Do you have any idea?"

"Sure, I've got an idea. A crazy one, but an idea. I don't think he wanted me because of the writing. I think he wanted me because I'm a propagandist."

She scowled. "It still doesn't wash. There are lots of propagandists—and why would he want a propagandist?"

Shandor's eyes narrowed. "Let's let it ride for a moment. How about his files?"

"In his office in the State Department."

"He didn't keep anything personal at home?"

Her eyes grew wide. "Oh, no, he wouldn't have dared. Not the sort of work he was doing. With his files under lock and key in the State Department nothing could be touched without his knowledge, but at home anybody might have walked in."

"Of course. How about enemies? Did he have any particular enemies?"

She laughed humorlessly. "Name anybody in the current administration. I think he had more enemies than anybody else in the cabinet." Her mouth turned down bitterly. "He was a stumbling block. He got in people's way, and they hated him for it. They killed him for it."

Shandor's eyes widened. "You mean you think he was murdered?"

"Oh, no, nothing so crude. They didn't have to be crude. They just let him butt his head against a stone wall.

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Everything he tried was blocked, or else it didn't lead anywhere. Like this Berlin Conference. It's a powder keg. Dad gambled everything on going there, forcing the delegates to face facts, to really put their cards on the table. Ever since the United Nations fell apart in '72 dad had been trying to get America and Russia to sit at the same table. But the President cut him out at the last minute. It was planned that way, to let him get up to the very brink of it, and then slap him down hard. They did it all along. This was just the last he could take."

Shandor was silent for a moment. "Any particular thorns in his side?"

Ann shrugged. "Munitions people, mostly. Dartmouth Bearing had a pressure lobby that was trying to throw him out of the cabinet. The President sided with them, but he didn't dare do it for fear the people would squawk. He was planning to blame the failure of the Berlin Conference on dad and get him ousted that way."

Shandor stared. "But if that conference fails, *we're in full-scale war!*"

"Of course. That's the whole point." She scowled at her glass, blinking back tears. "Dad could have stopped it, but they wouldn't let him. *It killed him,* Tom!"

Shandor watched the smoke curling up from his cigarette. "Look," he said. "I've got an idea, and it's going to take some fast work. That conference could blow up any minute, and then I think we're going to be in real trouble. I want you to go to your father's office and get the contents of his personal file. Not the business files, his personal files. Put them in a briefcase and subway-express them to your home. If you have any trouble, have them check with PIB—we have full authority, and I'm it right now. I'll call them and give them the word. Then meet me here again, with the files, at 7:30 this evening."

She looked up, her eyes wide. "What—what are you going to do?"

Shandor snubbed out his smoke, his eyes bright. "I've got an idea that we may be onto something—just something I want to check. But I think if we work it right, we can lay these boys that fought your father out by the toes—"

The Library of Congress had been moved when the threat of bombing in Washington had become acute. Shandor took a cab to the Georgetown airstrip, checked the fuel in the 'copter. Ten minutes later he started the motor, and headed upwind into the haze over the hills. In less than half an hour he settled to the Library landing field in western Maryland,

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and strode across to the rear entrance.

The electronic cross-index had been the last improvement in the Library since the war with China had started in 1958. Shandor found a reading booth in one of the alcoves on the second floor, and plugged in the index. The cold, metallic voice of the automatic chirped twice and said, "Your reference, pleeyuz."

Shandor thought a moment. "Give me your newspaper files on David Ingersoll, Secretary of State."

"Through which dates, pleeyuz."

"Start with the earliest reference, and carry through to current." The speaker burped, and he sat back, waiting. A small grate in the panel before him popped open, and a small spool plopped out onto a spindle. Another followed, and another. He turned to the reader, and reeled the first spool into the intake slot. The light snapped on, and he began reading.

Spools continued to plop down. He read for several hours, taking a dozen pages of notes. The references commenced in June, 1961, with a small notice that David Ingersoll, Republican from New Jersey, had been nominated to run for state senator. Before that date, nothing. Shandor scowled, searching for some item predating that one. He found nothing.

Scratching his head, he continued reading, outlining chronologically. Ingersoll's election to state senate, then to United States Senate. His rise to national prominence as economist for the post-war Administrator of President Drayton in 1966. His meteoric rise as a peacemaker in a nation tired from endless dreary years of fighting in China and India. His tremendous popularity as he tried to stall the re-intensifying cold-war with Russia. The first Nobel Peace Prize, in 1969, for the ill-fated Ingersoll Plan for World Sovereignty. Pages and pages and pages of newsprint. Shandor growled angrily, surveying the pile of notes with a sinking feeling of incredulity. The articles, the writing, the tone—it was all too familiar. Carefully he checked the newspaper sources. Some of the dispatches were Associated Press; many came direct desk from Public Information Board in New York; two other networks sponsored some of the wordage. But the tone was all the same.

Finally, disgusted, Tom stuffed the notes into his briefcase, and flipped down the librarian lever. "Sources, please."

A light blinked, and in a moment a buzzer sounded at his elbow. A female voice, quite human, spoke as he lifted the receiver. "Can I help you on sources?"

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"Yes. I've been reading the newspaper files on David Ingersoll. I'd like the by-lines on this copy."

There was a moment of silence. "Which dates, please?"

Shandor read off his list, giving dates. The silence continued for several minutes as he waited impatiently. He was about to hang up and leave when the voice spoke up again. "I'm sorry, sir. Most of that material has no by-line. Except for one or two items it's all staff-written."

"By whom?"

"I'm sorry, no source is available. Perhaps the PIB offices could help you—"

"All right, ring them for me, please." He waited another five minutes, saw the PIB cross-index clerk appear on the video screen. "Hello, Mr. Shandor. Can I help you?"

"I'm trying to trace down the names of the Associated Press and PIB writers who covered stories on David Ingersoll over a period from June 1961 to the present date—"

The girl disappeared for several moments. When she reappeared, her face was puzzled. "Why, Mr. Shandor, you've been doing the work on Ingersoll from August, 1978 to Sept. 1982. We haven't closed the files on this last month yet—"

He scowled in annoyance. "Yes, yes, I know that. I want the writers before I came."

The clerk paused. "Until you started your work there was no definite assignment. The information just isn't here. But the man you replaced in PIB was named Frank Mariel."

Shandor turned the name over in his mind, decided that it was familiar, but that he couldn't quite place it. "What's this man doing now?"

The girl shrugged. "I don't know, just now, and have no sources. But according to our files he left Public Information Board to go to work in some capacity for Dartmouth Bearing Corporation."

Shandor flipped the switch, and settled back in the reading chair. Once again he fingered through his notes, frowning, a doubt gnawing through his mind into certainty. He took up a dozen of the stories, analyzed them carefully, word for word, sentence by sentence. Then he sat back, his body tired, eyes closed in concentration, an incredible idea twisting and writhing and solidifying in his mind.

It takes one to catch one. That was his job—telling lies. Writing stories that weren't true, and making them believable. Making people think one thing when the truth was something else. It wasn't so strange that he could detect exactly the same sort of thing when he ran into it. He thought it through again and again, and every time he

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came up with the same answer. There was no doubt.

Reading the newspaper files had accomplished only one thing. He had spent the afternoon reading a voluminous, neat, smoothly written, extremely convincing batch of bold-faced lies. Lies about David Ingersoll. Somewhere, at the bottom of those lies was a shred or two of truth, a shred hard to analyze, impossible to segregate from the garbage surrounding it. But somebody had written the lies. That meant that somebody knew the truths behind them.

Suddenly he galvanized into action. The video blinked protestingly at his urgent summons, and the Washington visiphone operator answered. "Somewhere in those listings of yours," Shandor said, "you've got a man named Frank Mariel. I want his number."

He reached the downtown restaurant half an hour early, and ducked into a nearby visiphone station to ring Hart. The PIB director's chubby face materialized on the screen after a moment's confusion, and Shandor said: "John—what are your plans for releasing the Ingersoll story? The morning papers left him with a slight head cold, if I remember right—" Try as he would, he couldn't conceal the edge of sarcasm in his voice.

Hart scowled. "How's the biography coming?"

"The biography's coming along fine. I want to know what kind of quicksand I'm wading through, that's all."

Hart shrugged and spread his hands. "We can't break the story proper until you're ready with your buffer story. Current plans say that he gets pneumonia tomorrow, and goes to Walter Reed tomorrow night. We're giving it as little emphasis as possible, running the Berlin Conference stories for right-hand column stuff. That'll give you all day tomorrow and half the next day for the preliminary stories on his death. Okay?"

"That's not enough time." Shandor's voice was tight.

"It's enough for a buffer-release." Hart scowled at him, his round face red and annoyed. "Look, Tom, you get that story in, and never mind what you like or don't like. This is dynamite you're playing with—the Conference is going to be on the rocks in a matter of hours—that's straight from the Undersecretary—and on top of it all, there's trouble down in Arizona—"

Shandor's eyes widened. "The Rocket Project—?"

Hart's mouth twisted. "Sabotage. They picked up a whole ring that's been operating for over a year. Caught them red-handed, but not before they burnt out half a

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calculator wing. They'll have to move in new machines now before they can go on—set the Project back another week, and that could lose the war for us right there. Now *get that story in.*" He snapped the switch down, leaving Shandor blinking at the darkened screen.

Ten minutes later Ann Ingersoll joined him in the restaurant booth. She was wearing a chic white linen outfit, with her hair fresh, like a blonde halo around her head in the fading evening light. Her freshness contrasted painfully with Tom's curling collar and dirty tie, and he suddenly wished he'd picked up a shave. He looked up and grunted when he saw the fat briefcase under the girl's arm, and she dropped it on the table between them and sank down opposite him, studying his face. "The reading didn't go so well," she said.

"The reading went lousy," he admitted sheepishly. "This the personal file?"

She nodded shortly and lit a cigarette. "The works. They didn't even bother me. But I can't see why all the precaution— I mean, the express and all that—"

Shandor looked at her sharply. "If what you said this morning was true, that file is a gold mine, for us, but more particularly, for your father's enemies. I'll go over it closely when I get out of here. Meantime, there are *one or two other things* I want to talk over with you."

She settled herself, and grinned. "Okay, boss. Fire away."

He took a deep breath, and tiredness lined his face. "First off: what did your father do before he went into politics?"

Her eyes widened, and she arrested the cigarette halfway to her mouth, put it back on the ashtray, with a puzzled frown on her face. "That's funny," she said softly. "I thought I knew, but I guess I don't. He was an industrialist—way, far back, years and years ago, when I was just a little brat—and then we got into the war with China, and I don't know what he did. He was always making business trips; I can remember going to the airport with mother to meet him, but I don't know what he did. Mother always avoided talking about him, and I never got to see him enough to talk—"

Shandor sat forward, his eyes bright. "Did he ever entertain any business friends during that time—any that you can remember?"

She shook her head. "I can't remember. Seems to me a man or two came home with him on a couple of occasions, but I don't know who. I don't remember much before the night he came home and said he was going to run for Congress. Then there were people galore—have been ever since."

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"And what about his work at the end of the China war? After he was elected, while he was doing all that work to try to smooth things out with Russia—can you remember him saying anything, to you, or to your mother, about *what* he was doing, and how?"

She shook her head again. "Oh, yes, he'd talk—he and mother would talk—sometimes argue. I had the feeling that things weren't too well with mother and dad many times. But I can't remember anything specific, except that he used to say over and over how he hated the thought of another war. He was afraid it was going to come—"

Shandor looked up sharply. "But he hated it—"

"Yes." Her eyes widened. "Oh, yes, he hated it. Dad was a good man, Tom. He believed with all his heart that the people of the world wanted peace, and that they were being dragged to war because they couldn't find any purpose to keep them from it. He believed that if the people of the world had a cause, a purpose, a driving force, that there wouldn't be any more wars. Some men fought him for preaching peace, but he wouldn't be swayed. Especially he hated the pure-profit lobbies, the patriotic drumbeaters who stood to get rich in a war. But dad had to die, and there aren't many men like him left now, I guess."

"I know." Shandor fell silent, stirring his coffee glumly. "Tell me," he said, "did your father have anything to do with a man named Mariel?"

Ann's eyes narrowed. "Frank Mariel? He was the newspaper man. Yes, dad had plenty to do with him. He hated dad's guts, because dad fought his writing so much. Mariel was one of the 'fight now and get rich' school that were continually plaguing dad."

"Would you say that they were enemies?"

She bit her lip, wrinkling her brow in thought. "Not at first. More like a big dog with a little flea, at first. Mariel pestered dad, and dad tried to scratch him away. But Mariel got into PIB, and then I suppose you could call them enemies—"

Shandor sat back, frowning, his face dark with fatigue. He stared at the table top for a long moment, and when he looked up at the girl his eyes were troubled. "There's something wrong with this," he said softly. "I can't quite make it out, but it just doesn't look right. Those newspaper stories I read—pure bushwa, from beginning to end. I'm dead certain of it. And yet—" he paused, searching for words. "Look. It's like I'm looking at a jigsaw puzzle that *looks* like it's all completed and lying out on the table. But there's something that tells me I'm

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being foxed, that it isn't a complete puzzle at all, just an illusion, yet somehow I can't even tell for sure where pieces are missing—"

The girl leaned over the table, her grey eyes deep with concern. "Tom," she said, almost in a whisper. "Suppose there *is* s o m e t h i n g, Tom. Something big, what's it going to do to *you*, Tom? You can't fight anything as powerful as PIB, and these men that hated dad could break you."

Tom grinned tiredly, his eyes far away. "I know," he said softly. "But a man can only swallow so much. Somewhere, I guess, I've still got a conscience—it's a nuisance, but it's still there." He looked closely at the lovely girl across from him. "Maybe it's just that I'm tired of being sick of myself. I'd like to *like* myself for a change. I haven't liked myself for years." He looked straight at her, his voice very small in the still booth. "I'd like some other people to like me, too. So I've got to keep going—"

Her hand was in his, then, grasping his fingers tightly, and her voice was trembling. "I didn't think there was anybody left like that," she said. "Tom, you aren't by yourself —remember that. No matter what happens, I'm with you all the way. I'm—I'm afraid, but I'm with you."

He looked up at her then, and his voice was tight. "Listen, Ann. Your father planned to go to Berlin before he died. What was he going to *do* if he went to the Berlin Conference?"

She s h r u g g e d helplessly. "The usual diplomatic fol-de-rol, I suppose. He always—"

"No, no—that's not right. He wanted to go so badly that he died when he wasn't allowed to, Ann. He must have had something in mind, something concrete, something tremendous. S o m e t h i n g that would have changed the picture a great deal."

And then she was staring at Shandor, her face white, grey eyes wide. "Of course he had something," she exclaimed. "He *must* have—oh, I don't know what, he wouldn't say what was in his mind, but when he came home after that meeting with the President he was furious— I've never seen him so furious, Tom, he was almost out of his mind with anger, and he paced the floor, and, swore and nearly tore the room apart. He wouldn't speak to anyone, just s t a m p e d around and threw things. And then we heard him cry out, and when we got to him he was unconscious on the floor, and he was dead when the doctor came—" She set her glass down with trembling fingers. "He had something big, Tom, I'm sure of it. He had some information that he planned to drop on the conference table with such a bang it would stop the whole world cold. *He*

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knew something that the conference doesn't know—"

Tom Shandor stood up, trembling, and took the briefcase. "It should be here," he said. "If not the whole story, at least the missing pieces." He started for the booth door. "Go home," he said. "I'm going where I can examine these files wihout any interference. Then I'll call you." And then he was out the door, shouldering his way through the crowded restaurant, frantically weaving his way to the street. He didn't hear Ann's voice as she called after him to stop, didn't see her stop at the booth door, watch in a confusion of fear and tenderness, and collapse into the booth, sobbing as if her heart would break. Because a crazy, twisted, impossible idea was in his mind, an idea that had plagued him since he had started reading that morning, an idea with an answer, an acid test, folded in the briefcase under his arm. He bumped into a fat man at the bar, grunted angrily, and finally reached the street, whistled at the cab that lingered nearby.

The car swung up before him, the door springing open automatically. He had one foot on the runningboard before he saw the trap, saw the tight yellowish face and the glittering eyes inside the cab. Suddenly there was an explosion of bright purple brilliance, and he was screaming, twisting and screaming and reeling backward onto the sidewalk, doubled over with the agonizing fire that burned through his side and down one leg, forcing scream after scream from his throat as he blindly staggered to the wall of the building, pounded it with his fists for relief from the searing pain. And then he was on his side on the sidewalk, sobbing blubbering incoherently to the uniformed policeman who was dragging him gently to his feet, seeing through burning eyes the group of curious people gathering around. Suddenly realization dawned through the pain, and he let out a cry of anger and bolted for the curb, knocking the policeman aside, his eyes wild, searching the receding stream of traffic for the cab, a picture of the occupant burned indelibly into his mind, a face he had seen, recognized. The cab was gone, he knew, gone like a breath of wind. The briefcase was also gone—

He gave the address of the Essex University Hospital to the cabby, and settled back in the seat, gripping the handguard tightly to fight down the returning pain in his side and leg. His mind was whirling, fighting in a welter of confusion, trying to find some avenue of approach, some way to make sense of the mess. The face in the cab recurred again and again before his eyes, the gaunt, put-

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ty-colored cheeks, the sharp glittering eyes. His acquaintance with Frank Mariel had been brief and unpleasant, in the past, but that was a face he would never forget. But how could Mariel have known where he would be, and when? There was precision in that attack, far too smooth precision ever to have been left to chance, or even to independent planning. His mind skirted the obvious a dozen times, and each time rejected it angrily. Finally he knew he could no longer reject the thought, the only possible answer. Mariel had known where he would be, and at what time. Therefore, someone must have told him.

He stiffened in the seat, the pain momentarily forgotten. Only one person could have told Mariel. Only one person knew where the file was, and where it would be after he left the restaurant—he felt cold bitterness creep down his spine. She had known, and sat there making eyes at him, and telling him how wonderful he was, how she was with him no matter what happened—and she'd already sold him down the river. He shook his head angrily, trying to keep his thoughts on a rational plane. *Why?* Why had she strung him along, why had she even started to help him? And why, above all, turn against her own father?

The Hospital driveway crunched under the cab, and he hopped out, wincing with every step, and walked into a phone booth off the lobby. He gave a name, and in a moment heard P. A. system echoing it: "Dr. Prex; calling Dr. Prex." In a moment he heard a receiver click off, and a familiar voice said, "Prex speaking."

"Prex, this is Shandor. Got a minute?"

The voice was cordial. "Dozens of them. Where are you?"

"I'll be up in your quarters," Shandor slammed down the receiver and started for the elevator to the Resident Physicians' wing.

He let himself in by a key, and settled down in the darkened room to wait an eternity before a tall, gaunt man walked in, snapped on a light, and loosened the white jacket at his neck. He was a young man, no more than thirty, with a tired, sober face and jet black hair falling over his forehead. His eyes lighted as he saw Shandor, and he grinned. "You look like you've been through the mill. What happened?"

Shandor stripped off his clothes, exposing the angry red of the seared skin. The tall man whistled softly, the smile fading. Carefully he examined the burned area, his fingers gentle on the tender surface, then he turned troubled eyes to Shandor. "You've been messing around with dirty guys, Tom. Nobody but a real dog would turn a scalder

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on a man." He went to a cupboard, returned with a jar of salve and bandages.

"Is it serious?" Shandor's face was deathly white. "I've been fighting shock with thiamin for the last hour, but I don't think I can hold out much longer."

Prex shrugged. "You didn't get enough to do any permanment damage, if that's what you mean. Just fried the pain-receptors in your skin to a crisp, is all. A little dose is so painful you can't do anything but holler for a while, but it won't hurt you permanently unless you get it all over you. Enough can kill you." He dressed the burned areas carefully, then bared Shandor's arm and used a pressure syringe for a moment. "Who's using one of those things?"

Shandor was silent for a moment. Then he said, "Look, Prex. I need some help, badly." His eyes looked up in dull anger. "I'm going to see a man tonight, and I want him to talk, hard and fast. I don't care right now if he nearly dies from pain, but I want him to talk. I need somebody along who knows how to make things painful."

Prex scowled, and pointed to the burn. "This the man?"

"That's the man."

Prex put away the salve. "I suppose I'll help you, then. Is this official, or grudge?"

"A little of both. Look, Prex, I know this is a big favor to ask, but it's on the level. Believe me, it's square, nothing shady about it. The method may not be legal, but the means are justified. I can't tell you what's up, but I'm asking you to trust me."

Prex grinned. "You say it's all right, it's all right. When?"

Shandor glanced at his watch. "About 3:00 this morning, I think. We can take your car."

They talked for a while, and a call took the doctor away. Shandor slept a little, then made some black coffee. Shortly before three the two men left the Hospital by the Physician's entrance, and Prex's little beat-up Dartmouth slid smoothly into the desultory traffic for the suburbs.

The apartment was small and neatly furnished. Shandor and the Doctor had been admitted by a sleepy doorman who had been jolted to sudden attention by Tom's PIB card, and after five minutes pounding on the apartment door, a sleepy-eyed man opened the door a crack. "Say, what's the idea pounding on a man's door at this time of night? Haven't you—"

Shandor gave the door a shove with his shoulder, driving it open into the room. "Shut up," he said bluntly. He turned so the light struck his face, and the little man's jaw dropped in astonishment. "Shandor!" he whispered.

Frank Mariel looked like a weasel—sallow, sunken-

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cheeked, with a yellowish cast to his skin that contrasted unpleasantly with the coal black hair. "That's right," said Shandor. "We've come for a little talk. Meet the doctor."

Mariel's eyes shifted momentarily to Prex's stoney face, then back to Shandor, ghosts of fear creeping across his face. "What do you want?"

"I've come for the files."

The little man scowled. "You've come to the wrong man. I don't have any files."

Prex carefully took a small black case from his pocket, unsnapped a hinge, and a small, shiny instrument fell out in his hand. "The files," said Shandor. "Who has them?"

"I—I don't know—"

Shandor smashed a fist into the man's face, viciously, knocking him reeling to the floor. "You tried to kill me tonight," he snarled. "You should have done it up right. You should stick to magazine editing and keep your nose out of dirty games, Mariel. Who has the files?"

Mariel picked himself up, trembling, met Shandor's fist, and sprawled again, a trickle of blood appearing at his mouth. "Harry Dartmouth has the files," he groaned. "They're probably in Chicago now."

"What do you know about Harry Dartmouth?"

Mariel gained a chair this time before Shandor hit him. "I've only met him a couple of times. He's the president of Dartmouth Bearing Corporation and he's my boss—Dartmouth Bearing publishes *"Fighting World."* I do what he tells me."

Shandor's eyes flared. "Including murder, is that right?" Mariel's eyes were sullen. "Come on, talk! Why did Dartmouth want Ingersoll's personal files?"

The man just stared sullenly at the floor. Prex pressed a stud on the side of the shiny instrument, and a purple flash caught Mariel's little finger. Mariel jerked and squealed with pain. "Speak up," said Shandor. "I didn't hear you."

"Probably about the bonds," Mariel whimpered. His face was ashen, and he eyed Prex with undisguised pleading. "Look, tell him to put that thing away—"

Shandor grinned without humor. "You don't like scalders, eh? Get a big enough dose, and you're dead, Mariel—but I guess you know that, don't you? Think about it. But don't think too long. What about the bonds?"

"Ingersoll has been trying to get Dartmouth Bearing Corporation on legal grounds for years. Something about the government bonds they held, bought during the China wars. You know, surplus profits—Dartmouth Bearing could beat the taxes by buying bonds. Harry Dartmouth thought Ingersoll's files had some legal dope against them

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—he was afraid you'd try to make trouble for the company—"

"So he hired his little pixie, eh? Seems to me you'd have enough on your hands editing that rag—"

Mariel shot him an injured look. "'*Fighting World*' has the second largest magazine circulation in the country. It's a good magazine."

"It's a warmonger propaganda rag," snapped Shandor. He glared at the little man. "What's your relation to Ingersoll?"

"I hated his guts. He was carrying his lily-livered pacifism right to the White House, and I couldn't see it. So I fought him every inch of the way. I'll fight what he stands for now he's dead—"

Shandor's eyes narrowed. "That was a mistake, Mariel. You weren't supposed to know he is dead." He walked over to the little man, whose face was a shade whiter yet. "Funny," said Shandor quietly. "You say you hated him, but I didn't get that impression at all."

Mariel's eyes opened wide. "What do you mean?"

"Everything you wrote for PIB seems to have treated him kindly."

A shadow of deep concern crossed Mariel's face, as though for the first time he found himself in deep water. "PIB told me what to write, and I wrote it. You know how they work."

"Yes, I know how they work. I also know that most of your writing, while you were doing Public Information Board work, was never ordered by PIB. Ever hear of Ben Chamberlain, Mariel? Or Frank Eberhardt? Or Jon Harding? Ever hear of them, Mariel?" Shandor's voice cut sharply through the room. "Ben Chamberlain wrote for every large circulation magazine in the country, after the Chinese war. Frank Eberhardt was the man behind Associated Press during those years. Jon Harding was the silent publisher of three newspapers in Washington, two in New York, and one in Chicago. Ever hear of those men, Mariel?"

"No, no—"

"You know damned well you've heard of them. Because *those men were all you*. Every single one of them—" Shandor was standing close to him, now, and Mariel sat like he had seen a ghost, his lower lip quivering, forehead wet. "No no, you're wrong—"

'No no, I'm right" mocked Shandor. "I've been in the newspaper racket for a long time, Mariel. I've got friends in PIB—real friends, not the shamus crowd you're acquainted with that'll take you for your last nickel and then leave you to starve. Never mind how I found out. You hated Ingersoll so much you handed him bouquets all the time. How about it, Mariel?

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All that writing—you couldn't praise him enough. Boosting him, beating the drum for him and his policies—every trick and gimmick known in the propaganda game to give him a boost, make him the people's darling—how about it?"

Mariel was shaking his head, his little eyes nearly popping with fright. "It wasn't him," he choked. "Ingersoll had nothing to do with it. It was Dartmouth Bearing. They bought me into the spots. Got me the newspapers, supported me. Dartmouth Bearing ran the whole works, and they told me what to write—"

"Garbage! Dartmouth Bearing—the biggest munitions people in America, and I'm supposed to believe that they told you to go to bat for the country's strongest pacifist! What kind of sap do you take me for?"

"It's true! Ingersoll had nothing to do with it, nothing at all." Mariel's voice was almost pleading. "Look, I don't know what Dartmouth Bearing had in mind. Who was I to ask questions? You don't realize their power, Shandor. Those bonds I spoke of—they hold millions of dollars worth of bonds! They hold enough bonds to topple the economy of the nation, they've got bonds in the names of ten thousand subsidiary companies. They've been telling Federal Economics Commission what to do for the past ten years! And they're getting us into this war, Shandor—lock, stock and barrel. They pushed for everything they could get, and they had the money, the power, the men to do whatever they wanted. You couldn't fight them, because they had everything sewed up so tight nobody could approach them—"

Shandor's mind was racing, the missing pieces beginning, suddenly, to come out of the haze. The incredible, twisted idea broke through again, staggering him, driving through his mind like icy steel. "Listen, Mariel. I swear I'll kill you if you lie to me, so you'd better tell the truth. Who put you on my trail? Who told you Ingersoll was dead, and that I was scraping up Ingersoll's past?"

The little man twisted his hands, almost in tears. "Harry Dartmouth told me—"

"And who told Harry Dartmouth?"

Mariel's voice was so weak it could hardly be heard. "The girl," he said.

Shandor felt the chill deepen. "And where are the files now?"

"Dartmouth has them. Probably in Chicago—I expressed them. The girl didn't dare send them direct, for fear you would check, or that she was being watched. I was supposed to pick them

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up from you, and see to it that you didn't remember—"

Shandor clenched his fist. "Where are Dartmouth's plants located?"

"The main plants are in Chicago and Newark. They've got a smaller one in Nevada."

"And what do they make?"

"In peacetime—cars. In wartime they make tanks and shells."

"And their records? Inventories? Shipping orders, and files? Where do they keep them?"

"I—I don't know. You aren't thinking of—"

"Never mind what I'm thinking of, just answer up. Where are they?"

"All the administration offices are in Chicago. But they'd kill you, Shandor—you wouldn't stand a chance. They can't be fought, I tell you."

Shandor nodded to Prex, and started for the door. "Keep him here until dawn, then go on home, and forget what you heard. If anything happens, give me a ring at my home." He glared at Mariel. "Don't worry about me, bud—they won't be doing anything to me when I get through with them. They just won't be doing anything at all."

The idea had crystallized as he talked to Mariel. Shandor's mind was whirling as he walked down toward the thoroughfare. Incredulously, he tried to piece the picture together. He had known Dartmouth Bearing was big—but that big? Mariel might have been talking nonsense, or he might have been reading the Gospel. Shandor hailed a cab, sat back in the seat scratching his head. How big could Dartmouth Bearing be? Could *any* corporation be that big? He thought back, remembering the rash of post-war scandals and profit-gouging trials, the anti-trust trials. In wartime, bars are let down, *no one* can look with disfavor on the factories making the weapons. And if one corporation could buy, and expand, and buy some more—it might be too powerful to be prosecuted after the war—

Shandor shook his head, realizing that he was skirting the big issue. Dartmouth Bearing connected up, in some absurd fashion, but there was a missing link. Mariel fit into one side of the puzzle, interlocking with Dartmouth. The stolen files might even fit, for that matter. But the idea grew stronger. A great, jagged piece in the middle of the puzzle was missing—the key piece which would tie everything together. He felt his skin prickle as he thought. An impossible idea—and yet, he realized, if it were true, everything else would fall clearly into place—

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He sat bolt upright. It *had* to be true—

He leaned forward and gave the cabbie the landing field address, then sat back, feeling his pulse pounding through his arms and legs. Nervously he switched on the radio. The dial fell to some jazz music, which he tolerated for a moment or two, then flipped to a news broadcast. Not that news broadcasts really meant much, but he wanted to hear the Ingersoll story release for the day. He listened impatiently to a roundup of local news: David Ingersoll s t r i c k e n with pneumonia, three Senators protesting the current tax bill—he brought his attention around sharply at the sound of a familiar name—

"—disappeared f r o m his Chicago home early this morning. Mr. Dartmouth is president of Dartmouth Bearing Corporation, currently engaged in the manufacture of munitions for Defense, and producing much of the machinery being used in the Moon-rocket in Arizona. Police are following all possible leads, and are confident that there has been no foul play.

"On the i n t e r n a t i o n a l scene, the Kremlin is still blocking—" Shandor snapped off the radio abruptly, his forehead damp. Dartmouth disappeared, and with him the files—why? And where to go now to find them? If the idea that was plaguing him was true, sound, valid—he'd *have* to have the files. His whole body was wet with perspiration as he reached the landing field.

The trip to the Library of Congress seemed endless, yet he knew that the Library wouldn't be open until 8:00 anyway. Suddenly he felt a wave of extreme weariness sweep over him—when had he last slept? Bored, he snapped the telephone switch and rang PIB offices for his mail. To his surprise, John Hart took the wire, and exploded in his ear, "Where in hell have you been? I've been trying to get you all night. Listen, Tom, drop the Ingersoll story cold, and get in here. The faster the better.

Shandor b l i n k e d. "Drop the story? You're crazy!"

"Get in here!" roared Hart. "From now on you've *really* got a job. The Berlin Conference blew up tonight, Tom—high as a kite. *We're at war with Russia—"*

Carefully, Shandor plopped the receiver down on its hook, his hands like ice. Just one item f i r s t, he thought, just one thing I've got to know. *Then* back to PIB, maybe.

He found a booth in the Library, and began hunting, time pressing him into frantic speed. The idea was incredible, but it *had* to be

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true. He searched the microfilm files for three hours before he found it, in a "Who's Who" dating back to 1958, three years before the war with China. A simple, innocuous listing, which froze him to his seat. He read it, unbelievingly, yet knowing that it was the only possible link. Finally he read it again.

David P. Ingersoll. Born 1922, married 1947. Educated at Rutgers University and MIT. Worked as administrator for International Harvester until 1955. Taught Harvard University from 1955 to 1957.

David P. Ingersoll, becoming, in 1958, the executive president of Dartmouth Bearing Corporation...

He found a small, wooded glade not far from the Library, and set the 'copter down skillfully, his mind numbed, fighting to see through the haze to the core of incredible truth he had uncovered. The great, jagged piece, so long missing, was suddenly plopped right down into the middle of the puzzle, and now it didn't fit. There were still holes, holes that obscured the picture and twisted it into a nightmarish impossibility. He snapped the telephone switch, tried three numbers without any success, and finally reached the fourth. He heard Dr. Prex's sharp voice on the wire.

"Anything happen since I left, Prex?"

"Nothing remarkable." The doctor's voice sounded tired. "Somebody tried to call Mariel on the visiphone about an hour after you had gone, and then signed off in a hurry when he saw somebody else around. Don't know who it was, but he sounded mighty agitated." The doctor's voice paused. "Anything new, Tom?"

"Plenty," growled Shandor bitterly. "But you'll have to read it in the newspapers." He flipped off the connection before Prex could reply.

Then Shandor sank back and slept, the sleep of total exhaustion, hoping that a rest would make the shimmering, indefinite picture hold still long enough for him to study it. And as he drifted into troubled sleep a greater and more pressing question wormed upward into his mind.

He woke with a jolt, just as the sun was going down, and he knew then with perfect clarity what he had to do. He checked quickly to see that he had been undisturbed, and then manipulated the controls of the 'copter. Easing the ship into the sky toward Washington, he searched out a news report on the radio, listened with a dull feeling in the pit of his stomach as the story came through about the breakdown of the Berlin Conference, the

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declaration of war, the President's meeting with Congress that morning, his formal request for full wartime power, the granting of permission by a wide-eyed, frightened legislature. Shandor settled back, staring dully at the ground moving below him, the whisps of evening haze rising over the darkening land. There was only one thing to do. He had to have Ingersoll's files. He knew only one way to get them.

Half an hour later he was settling the ship down, under cover of darkness, on the vast grounds behind the Ingersoll estate, cutting the motors to effect a quiet landing. Tramping down the ravine toward the huge house, he saw it was dark; down by the gate he could see the Security Guard, standing in a haze of blue cigarette smoke under the dim-out lights. Cautiously he slipped across the back terrace, crossing behind the house, and jangled a bell on a side porch.

Ann Ingersoll opened the door, and gasped as Shandor forced his way in. "Keep quiet," he hissed, slipping the door shut behind him. Then he sighed, and walked through the entrance into the large front room.

"Tom! Oh, Tom, I was afraid— Oh, *Tom!*" Suddenly she was in his arms sobbing, pressing her face against his shirt front. "Oh, I'm so glad to see you, Tom—"

He disengaged her, turning from her and walking across the room. "Let's turn it off, Ann," he said disgustedly. "It's not very impressive."

"Tom—I—I *wanted* to tell you. I just didn't know what to do. I didn't believe them when they said you wouldn't be harmed, I was afraid. Oh, Tom, I wanted to tell you, believe me—"

"You didn't tell me," he snapped. "They were nervous, they slipped up. That's the only reason I'm alive. They planned to kill me."

She stared at him tearfully, shaking her head from side to side, searching for words. "I—I didn't want that—"

He whirled, his eyes blazing. "You silly fool, what do you think you're doing when you play games with a mob like this? Do you think they're going to play fair? You're no clod, you know better than that—" He leaned over her, trembling with anger. "You set me up for a sucker, but the plan fell through. And now I'm running around loose, and if you thought I was dangerous before, you haven't seen anything like how dangerous I am now. You're going to tell me some things, now, and you're going to tell them straight. You're going to tell me where Harry Dartmouth went with those files, where they are right now. Under-

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stand that? *I want those files.* Because when I have them I'm going to do exactly what I started out to do. I'm going to write a story, the whole rotten story about your precious father and his two-faced life. I'm going to write about Dartmouth Bearing Corporation and all its flunky outfits, and tell what they've done to this country and the people of this country." He paused, breathing heavily, and sank down on a chair, staring at her. "I've learned things in the past twenty-four hours I never dreamed could be true. I should be able to believe anything, I suppose, but these things knocked my stilts out from under me. This country has been had—right straight down the line, for a dozen years. We've been sold down the river like a pack of slaves, and now we're going to get a look at the cold ugly truth, for once."

She stared at him. "What do you mean—about my precious father—?"

"Your precious father was at the bottom of the whole slimy mess."

"No, no—not dad." She shook her head, her face chalky. "Harry Dartmouth, maybe, but not dad. Listen a minute. I didn't set you up for anything. I didn't know what Dartmouth and Mariel were up to. Dad left instructions for me to contact Harry Dartmouth immediately, in case he died. He told me that—oh, a year ago. Told me that before I did anything else, I should contact Dartmouth, and do as he said. So when he died, I contacted Harry, and kept in contact with him. He told me you were out to burn my father, to heap garbage on him after he was dead before the people who loved him, and he said the first thing you would want would be his personal files. Tom, I didn't know you, then—I knew Harry, and knew that Dad trusted him, for some reason, so I believed him. But I began to realize that what he said wasn't true. I got the files, and he said to give them to you, to string you along, and he'd pick them up from you before you had a chance to do any harm with them. He said he wouldn't hurt you, but I—I didn't believe him, Tom. I believed you, that you wanted to give Dad a fair shake—"

Shandor was on his feet, his eyes blazing. "So you turned them over to Dartmouth anyway? And what do you think he's done with them? Can you tell me that? Where has he gone? Has he burnt them? If not, what's he going to do with them?"

Her voice was weak, and she looked as if she were about to faint. "That's what I'm trying to tell you," she said, shakily. "He doesn't

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have them. I have them."

Shandor's jaw dropped. "Now, wait a minute," he said softly. "You gave me the briefcase, Mariel snatched it and nearly killed me—"

"A dummy, Tom. I didn't know who to trust, but I knew I believed you more than I believed Harry. Things happened so fast, and I was so confused—" She looked straight at him. "I gave you a dummy, Tom."

His knees walked out from under him, then, and he sank into a chair. "You've got them here, then," he said weakly.

"Yes. I have them here."

The room was in the back of the house, a small, crowded study, with a green-shaded desk lamp. Shandor dumped the contents of the briefcase onto the desk, and settled down, his heart pounding in his throat. He started at the top of the pile, sifting, ripping out huge sheafs of papers, receipts, notes, journals, clippings. He hardly noticed when the girl slipped out of the room, and he was deep in study when she returned half an hour later with steaming black coffee. With a grunt of thanks he drank it, never shifting his attention from the scatter of papers, papers from the personal file of a dead man. And slowly, the picture unfolded.

An ugly picture. A picture of deceit, a picture full of lies, full of secret promises, a picture of scheming, of plotting, planning, influencing, coercing, cheating, propagandizing—all with one single-minded aim, with a single terrible goal.

Shandor read, numbly, his mind twisting in protest as the picture unfolded. David Ingersoll's control of Dartmouth Bearing Corporation and its growing horde of subsidiaries under the figurehead of his protege, Harry Dartmouth. The huge profits from the Chinese war, the relaxation of control laws, the millions of war-won dollars ploughed back into government bonds, in a thousand different names, all controlled by Dartmouth Bearing Corporation—

And Ingersoll's own work in the diplomatic field—an incredibly skillful, incredibly evil channeling of power and pressure toward the inevitable goal, hidden under the cloak of peaceful respectability and popular support. The careful treaties, quietly disorganizing a dozen national economics, antagonizing the great nation to the East under the all too acceptable guise of "peace through strength." Reciprocal trade agreements bitterly antagonistic to Russian economic developement. The continual bickering, the skillful manipulation hidden under the powerful propaganda

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cloak of a hundred publications, all coursing to one ultimate, terrible goal, all with one purpose, one aim—

War. War with anybody, war in the field and war on the diplomatic front. Traces even remained of the work done within the enemy nations, bitter anti-Ingersoll propaganda from within the ranks of Russia herself, manipulated to strengthen Ingersoll in America, to build him up, to drive the nations farther apart, while presenting Ingersoll as the pathetic prince of world peace, fighting desperately to stop the ponderous wheels of the irresistible juggernaut—

And in America, the constant, unremitting literary and editorial drumbeating, pressuring greater war preparation, distilling hatreds in a thousand circles, focussing them into a single channel. Tremendous propaganda pressure to build armies, to build weapons, to get the Moonrocket project underway—

Shandor sat back, eyes drooping, fighting to keep his eyes open. His mind was numb, his body trembling. A sheaf of papers in a separate folder caught his eye, production records of the Dartmouth Bearing Corporation, almost up to the date of Ingersoll's death. Shandor frowned, a snag in the chain drawing his attention. He peered at the papers, vaguely puzzled. Invoices from the Chicago plant, materials for tanks, and guns, and shells. Steel, chemicals. The same for the New Jersey plant, the same with a dozen subsidiary plants. Shipments of magnesium and silver wire to the Rocket Project in Arizona, carried through several subsidiary offices. The construction of a huge calculator for the Project in Arizona. Motors and materials, all for Arizona—something caught his mind, brought a frown to his large bland face, some off-key note in the monstrous symphony of production and intrigue that threw up a red flag in his mind, screamed for attention—

And then he sipped the fresh coffee at his elbow and sighed, and looked up at the girl standing there, saw her hand tremble as she steadied herself against the desk, and sat down beside him. He felt a great confusion, suddenly, a vast sympathy for this girl, and he wanted to take her in his arms, hold her close, *protect* her, somehow. She didn't know, she *couldn't* know about this horrible thing. She couldn't have been a party to it, a part of it. He knew the evidence said yes, she knows the whole story, she *helped* them, but he also knew that the evidence, somehow, was wrong, that somehow, he still didn't have the whole picture—

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She looked at him, her voice t r e m b l i n g. "You're wrong, Tom." she said.

He shook his head, helplessly. "I'm sorry. It's horrible, I know. But I'm not wrong. This war was planned. We've been puppets on strings, and one man engineered it, from the very start. Your father."

Her eyes were filled with tears, and she shook her head, running a tired hand across her forehead. "You didn't know him, Tom. If you did, you'd know how wrong you are. He was a great man, fine man, but above all he was a *good* man. Only a monster could have done what you're thinking. Dad hated war, he fought it all his life. He couldn't be the monster you think."

Tom's voice was soft in the d a r k e n e d room, his eyes catching the downcast face of the trembling girl, fighting to believe in a phantom, and his hatred for the power that could trample a faith like that suddenly swelled up in bitter hopeless rage. "It's here, on paper, it can't be denied. It's hateful, but it's here, it's what I set out to learn. It's not a lie this time, Ann, it's the truth, and this time it's *got to be told*. I've written my last false story. This one is going to the people the way it is. This one is going to be the truth."

He stopped, staring at her. The puzzling, twisted hole in the puzzle was suddenly there, staring him in the face, falling down into place in his mind with blazing clarity. Staring, he dived into the pile of papers again, searching, frantically searching for the missing piece, something he had seen, and passed over, the one single piece in the story that didn't make sense. And he found it, on the lists of materials shipped to the Nevada plant. Pig Iron. Raw magnesium. Raw copper. Steel, electron tubes, plastics, from all parts of the country, all being shipped to the Dartmouth Plant in Nevada—

Where t h e y made only shells—

At first he thought it was only a rumble in his mind, the shocking realization storming through. Then he saw Ann jump up suddenly, white-faced and race to the window, and he heard the small scream in her throat. And then the rumbling grew louder, stronger, and the house trembled. He heard the whine of jet planes scream over the house as he joined her at the window, heard the screaming whines mingled with the rumbling thunder. And far away, on the horizon, the red glare was glowing, rising, burning up to a roaring conflagration in the black night sky—

"Washington!" Her voice was small, infinitely frightened.

"Yes. That's Washington."

"Then it really *has* started." She turned to him with eyes

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wide with horror, and snuggled up to his chest like a frightened child. "Oh, Tom—"

"It's here. What we've been waiting for. What your father started could never be stopped any other way than this—"

The roar was louder now, rising to a whining scream as another squad of dark ships roared overhead, moving East and South, jets whistling in the night. "This is what your father wanted."

She was crying, great sobs shaking her shoulders. "You're wrong, you're w r o n g—oh, Tom, you must be wrong—"

His voice was low, almost inaudible in the thundering roar of the bombardment. "Ann, I've got to go ahead. I've got to go tonight. To Nevada, to the Dartmouth plant there. I know I'm right, but I have to go, to check something—to make sure of something." He paused, looking down at her. "I'll be back, Ann. But I'm afraid of what I'll find out there. I need you behind me. Especially with what I have to do, I need you. You've got to decide. Are you for me? Or against me?"

She shook her head sadly, and sank into a chair, gently removing his hands from her waist. "I loved my father, Tom," she said in a beaten voice. "I can't help what he's done—I loved him. I—I can't be with you, Tom."

Far below him he could see the cars, jamming the roads leaving Washington. He could almost hear the noise, the screeching of brakes, the fist-fights, the shouts, the blatting of horns. He moved south over open country, hoping to avoid the places where the 'copter might be spotted and stopped for questioning. He knew that Hart would have an alarm out for him by now, and he didn't dare risk being stopped until he reached his destination, the place where the last piece to the puzzle could be found, the answer to the question that was burning through his mind. Shells were made of steel and chemicals. The tools that made them were also made of steel. Not manganese. Not copper. Not electron relays, nor plastic, nor liquid oxygen. Just steel.

The 'copter relayed south and then turned west over Kentucky. Shandor checked the auxilliary tanks which he had filled at the Library landing field that morning; then he turned the ship to robot controls and sank back in the seat to rest. His whole body clamored for sleep, but he knew he dare not sleep. Any slip, any contact with Army aircraft or Security patrol could throw everything into the fire—. For hours he sat, gazing hynotically at the black expanse of land below, flying high over the pitch-black countryside. Not a light showed, not a sign of life.

Bored, he flipped the radio button, located a news broadcast. "—the bombed area did not extend west of the Appa-

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lachians. Washington DC was badly hit, as were New York and Philadelphia, and further raids are expected to originate from Siberia, coming across the great circle to the West coast or the Middle west. So far the Enemy appears to have lived up to its agreement in the Ingersoll pact to outlaw use of atomic bombs, for no atomic weapons have been used so far, but the damage with block-busters has been heavy. All citizens are urged to maintain strictest blackout regulations, and to report as called upon in local work and civil defense pools as they are set up. The attack began—"

Shandor sighed, checked his instrument readings. Far in the East the horizon was beginning to lighten, a healthy, white-grey light. His calculations placed him over Eastern Nebraska, and a few moments later he nosed down cautiously and verified his location. Lincoln Airbase was in a flurry of activity; the field was alive with men, like little black ants, preparing the reserve fighters and pursuits for use in a fever of urgent speed. Suddenly the 'copter radio bleeped, and Tom threw the switch. "Over."

An angry voice snarled, "You up there, whoever you are, where'd you leave your brains? No civilian craft are allowed in the air, and that's orders straight from Washington. Don't you know there's a war on? Now get down here, before you're shot down—"

Shandor thought quickly. "This is a Federal Security ship," he snapped. "I'm just on a reconnaisance—"

The voice was cautious. "Security? What's your corroboration number?"

Shandor cursed. "JF223R-864. Name is Jerry Chandler. Give it a check if you want to." He flipped the switch, and accellerated for the ridge of hills that marked the Colorado border as the radio signal continued to bleep angrily, and a trio of pursuit planes on the ground began warming up. Shandor sighed, hoping they would check before they sent ships after him. It might at least delay them until he reached his destination.

Another hour carried him to the heart of the Rockies, and across the great salt fields of Utah. His fuel tanks were low, being emptied one by one as the tiny ship sped through the bright morning sky, and Tom was growing uneasy, until suddenly, far to the west and slightly to the north he spotted the plant, nestling in the mountain foothills. It lay far below, sprawling like some sort of giant spider across the rugged terrain. Several hundred cars spread out to the south of the plant, and he could see others speeding in from the temporary village across the ridge. Everything was quiet, orderly. He could see the shipments, crated, sit-

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ting in freight cars to the north. And then he saw the drill line running over to the right of the plant. He followed it, quickly checking a topographical map in the cockpit, and his heart started pounding. The railroad branch ran between two low peaks and curved out toward the desert. Moving over it, he saw the curve, saw it as it cut off to the left—and seemed to stop dead in the middle of the desert sand—

Shandor circled even lower, keeping one ear cocked on the radio, and settled the ship on the railroad line. And just as he cut the motors he heard the shrill whine of three pursuit ships screaming in from the Eastern horizon—

He was out of the 'copter almost as soon as it had touched, throwing a jacket over his arm, and racing for the place where the drill line ended. Because he had seen as he slid in for a landing, just what he had suspected from the topographical map. The drill didn't end in the middle of a desert at all. It went right on into the mountainside.

The excavation was quite large, the entrance covered and camouflaged neatly to give the very impression that he had gotten from the air. Under the camouflage the space was crowded, stacked with crates, boxes, materials, stacked all along the walls of the tunnel. He followed the rails in, lighting his way with a small pocket flashlight when the tunnel turned a corner, cutting off the daylight. Suddenly the tunnel widened, opening out into a much wider room. He sensed, rather than saw, the immense size of the vault, smelt the odd, bitter odor in the air. With the flashlight he probed the darkness, spotting the high, vaulted ceiling above him. And below him—

At first he couldn't see, probing the vast excavation before him, and then, strangely, he saw but couldn't realize what he saw. He stared for a solid minute, uncomprehending, then, stifling a gasp, he *knew what he was looking at*—

Lights. He had to have lights, to see clearly what he couldn't believe. Frantically, he spun the flashlight, seeking a light panel, and then, fascinated, he turned the little oval of light back to the pit. And then he heard the barest whisper of sound, the faintest intake of breath, and he ducked, frozen, as a blow whistled past his ear. A second blow from the side caught him solidly in the blackness, grunting, flailing out into a tangle of legs and arms, cursing, catching a foot in his face, striking up into soft, yielding flesh—

And his head suddenly exploded into a million dazzling lights as he sank unconscious to the ground—

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It was a tiny room, completely without windows, the artificial light filtering through from ventilation slits near the top. Shandor sat up, shaking as the chill in the room became painfully evident. A small electric heater sat in the corner beaming valiantly, but the heat hardly reached his numbed toes. He stood up, shaking himself, slapping his arms against his sides to drive off the coldness—and he heard a noise through the door as soon as he had made a sound.

Muted footsteps stopped outside the door, and a huge man stepped inside. He looked at Shandor carefully, then closed the door behind him, without locking it. "I'm Baker," he rasped cheerfully. "How are you feeling?"

Shandor rubbed his head, suddenly and acutely aware of a very sore nose and a bruised rib cage. "Not so hot," he muttered. "How long have I been out?"

"Long enough." The man pulled out a plug of tobacco, ripped off a chunk with his teeth. "Chew?"

"I smoke." Shandor fished for cigarettes in an empty pocket.

"Not in here you don't," said Baker. He shrugged his huge shoulders and settled affably down on a bench near the wall. "You feel like talking?"

Shandor eyed the unlocked door, and turned his eyes to the huge man. "Sure," he said. "What do you want to talk about?"

"I don't want to talk about nothin' ", the big man replied, indifferently. "Thought you might, though."

"Are you the one that roughed me up?"

"Yuh." Baker grinned. "Hope I didn't hurt you much. Boss said to keep you in one piece, but we had to hurry up, and take care of those Army guys you brought in on your tail. That was dumb. You almost upset everything."

Memory flooded back, and Shandor's eyes widened. "Yes—they followed me all the way from Lincoln—what happened to them?"

Baker grinned and chomped his tobacco. "They're a long way away now. Don't worry about them."

Shandor eyed the door uneasily. The latch hadn't caught, and the door had swung open an inch or two. "Where am I?" he asked, inching toward the door. "What—what are you planning to do to me?"

Baker watched him edging away. "You're safe," he said. "The boss'll talk to you pretty soon if you feel like it—" He squinted at Tom in surprise, pointing an indolent thumb toward the door. "You planning to go out or something?"

Tom stopped short, his face red. The big man shrugged. "Go ahead. I ain't going to stop you." He grinned. "Go as far as you can."

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Without a word Shandor threw open the door, looked out into the concrete corridor. At the end was a large, bright room. Cautiously he started down, then suddenly let out a cry and broke into a run, his eyes wide—

He reached the room, a large room, with heavy plastic windows. He ran to one of the windows, pulse pounding, and stared, a cry choking in his throat. The blackness of the crags contrasted dimly with the inky blackness of the sky beyond. Mile upon mile of jagged, rocky crags, black rock, ageless, unaged rock. And it struck him with a jolt how easily he had been able to run, how lightning-swift his movements. He stared again, and then he saw what he had seen in the pit, standing high outside the building on a rocky flat, standing bright and silvery, like a phantom finger pointing to the inky heavens, sleek, smooth, resting on polished tailfins, like an otherworldly bird poised for flight—

A voice behind him said, "You aren't really going anyplace, you know. Why run?" It was a soft voice, a kindly voice, cultured, not rough and biting like Baker's voice. It came from directly behind Shandor, and he felt his skin crawl. He had heard that voice before—many times before. Even in his dreams he had heard that voice. "You see, it's pretty cold out there. And there isn't any air. You're on the Moon, Mr. Shandor—"

He whirled, his face twisted and white. And he stared at the small figure standing at the door, a stoop-shouldered man, white hair slightly untidy, crow's-feet about his tired eyes. An old man, with eyes that carried a sparkle of youth and kindliness. The eyes of David P. Ingersoll.

Shandor stared for a long moment, shaking his head like a man seeing a phantom. When he found words, his voice was choked, the words wrenched out as if by force. "You're—you're alive."

"Yes. I'm alive."

"Then—" Shandor shook his head violently, turning to the window, and back to the small, white-haired man. "Then your death was just a fake."

The old man nodded tiredly. "That's right. Just a fake."

Shandor stumbled to a chair, sat down woodenly. "I don't get it," he said dully. "I just don't get it. The war—that—that I can see. I can see how you worked it, how you engineered it, but this—" he gestured feebly at the window, at the black, impossible landscape outside. "This I can't see. They're bombing us to pieces, they're bombing out Washington, probably your own home, your own family—last night—" he stopped, frowning in confusion,— "no, it couldn't have been last night—two days ago? —well, whatever day it was, they were bombing us to pieces,

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and you're up here—*why?* What's it going to get you? This war, this whole rotten intrigue mess, and then *this?*"

The old man walked across the room and stared for a moment at the silent ship outside. "I hope I can make you understand. We had to come here. We had no choice. We couldn't do what we wanted any other way than to come here—*first.* Before anybody else."

"But why *here?* They're building a rocket there in Arizona. They'll be up here in a few days, maybe a few weeks—"

"Approximately forty-eight hours," corrected Ingersoll quietly. "Within forty-eight hours the Arizona rocket will be here. If the Russian rocket doesn't get here first."

"It doesn't make sense. It won't do you any good to be here if the Earth is blasted to bits. Why come here? And why bring *me* here, of all people? What do you want with me?"

Ingersoll smiled and sat down opposite Shandor. "Take it easy," he said gently. "You're here, you're safe, and you're going to get the whole story. I realize that this is a bit of a jolt—but you had to be jolted. With you I think the jolt will be very beneficial, since we want you with us. That's why we brought you here. We need your help, and we need it very badly. It's as simple as that."

Shandor was on his feet, his eyes blazing. "No dice. This is your game, not mine. I don't want anything to do with it—"

"But you don't know the game—"

"I know plenty of the game. I followed the trail, right from the start. I know the whole rotten mess. The trail led me all the way around Robin Hood's barn, but it told me things—oh, it told me plenty! It told me about you, and this war. And now, you want me to help you! What do you want me to do? Go down and tell the people it isn't really so bad being pounded to shreds? Should I tell them they aren't r e a l l y being bombed, it's all in their minds? Shall I tell them this is a war to defend their freedoms, that it's a great crusade against the evil forces of the world? What kind of a sap do you think I am?" He walked to the window, his whole body trembling with anger. "I followed this trail down to the end, I scraped my way down into the dirtiest, slimiest depths of the barrel, and I've found you down there, and your rotten corporations, and your crowd of heelers. And on the other side are three hundred million people taking the lash end of the whip on Earth, helping to feed you. And you ask me to help you!"

"Once upon a time," Ingersoll i n t e r r u p t e d quietly, "there was a fox."

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Shandor stopped and stared at him.

"—and the fox got caught in a trap. A big bear trap, with steel jaws, that clamped down on him and held him fast by the leg. He wrenched and he pulled, but he couldn't break that trap open, no matter what he did. And the fox knew that the farmer would come along almost any time to open that bear trap, and the fox knew the farmer would kill him. He knew that if he didn't get out of that trap, he'd be finished, sure as sin. But he was a clever fox, and he found a way to get out of the bear trap." Ingersoll's voice was low, tense in the still room. "Do you know what he did?"

Shandor shook his head silently.

"It was a very simple solution," said Ingersoll. "Drastic, but simple. *He gnawed off his leg.*"

Another man had entered the room, a small, weasel-faced man with sallow cheeks and slick black hair. Ingersoll looked up with a smile, but Mariel waved him on, and took a seat nearby.

"So he chewed off his leg," Shandor repeated dully. "I don't get it."

"The world is in a trap," said Ingersoll, watching Shandor with quiet eyes. "A great big bear trap. It's been in that trap for decades—ever since the first World War. The world has come to a wall it can't climb, a trap it can't get out of, a vicious, painful, torturous trap, and the world has been struggling for seven decades to get out. It hasn't succeeded. And the time is drawing rapidly nigh for the farmer to come. Something had to be done, and done fast, before it was too late. The fox had to chew off its leg. And I had to bring the world to the brink of a major war."

Shandor shook his head, his mind buzzing. "I don't see what you mean. We never had a chance for peace, we never had a chance to get our feet on the ground from one round to the next. No time to do anything worthwhile in the past seventy years—I don't see what you mean about a trap."

Ingersoll settled back in his chair, the light catching his face in sharp profile. "It's been a century of almost continuous war," he said. "You've pointed out the whole trouble. We haven't had time to catch our breath, to make a real peace. The first World War was a sorry affair, by our standards—almost a relic of earlier European wars. Trench fighting, poor rifles, soap-box aircraft—nothing to distinguish it from earlier wars but its scope. But twenty uneasy years went by, and another war began, a very different sort of war. This one had fast aircraft, fast mechanized forces, heavy bombing, and finally, to cap the climax, atomics. That second World War could hold up its

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head as a real, strapping, fighting war in any society of wars. It was a stiff war, and a terrible one. Quite a bit of progress, for twenty years. But essentially, it was a war of ideologies, just as the previous one had been. A war of intolerance, of unmixable ideas—"

The old man paused, and drew a sip of water from the canister in the corner. "Somewhere, somehow, the world had missed the boat. Those wars didn't solve anything, they didn't even make a very strong pretense. They just made things worse. Somewhere, human society had gotten into a trap, a vicious circle. It had reached the end of its progressive tether, it had no place to go, no place to expand, to great common goal. So ideologies arose to try to solve the dilemma of a basically static society, and they fought wars. And they reached a point, finally, where they could destroy themselves unless they broke the vicious circle, somehow."

Shandor looked up, a deep frown on his face. "You're trying to say that they needed a new frontier."

"Exactly! They desperately needed it. There was only one more frontier they could reach for. A frontier which, once attained, has no real end." He gestured toward the black landscape outside. "There's the frontier. Space. The one thing that could bring human wars to an end. A vast, limitless frontier which could drive men's spirits upward and outward for the rest of time. And that frontier seemed unattainable. It was blocked off by a wall, by the jaws of a trap. Oh, they tried. After the first war the work began. The second war contributed unimaginaby to the technical knowledge. But after the second war, they could go no further. Because it cost money, it required a tremendous effort on the part of the people of a great nation to do it, and they couldn't see why they should spend the money to get to space. After all, they had to work up the atomics and new weapons for the next war—it was a trap, as strong and treacherous as any the people of the world had ever encountered.

"The answer, of course, was obvious. Each war brought a great surge of technological developement, to build better weapons, to fight bigger wars. Some developments led to extreme-beneficial ends, too—if it hadn't been for the second war, a certain British biologist might still be piddling around his understaffed, underpaid laboratory, wishing he had more money, and wondering why it was that that dirty patch of mold on his petri dish seemed to keep bacteria from growing—but

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the second war created a sudden, frantic, urgent demand for something, anything, that would *stop infection—fast.* And in no time, penicillin was in mass production, saving untold thousands of lives. There was no question of money. Look at the Manhattan project. How many millions went into that? It gave us atomic power, for war, and for peace. For peaceful purposes, the money would never have been spent. But if it was for the sake of war—"

Ingersoll smiled tiredly. "Sounds insane, doesn't it? But look at the record. I looked at the record, way back at the end of the war with China. Other men looked at the record, too. We got together, and talked. We knew that the military advantage of a rocket base on the moon could be a deciding factor in another major war. Military experts had recognized that fact back in the 1950's. Another war could give men the technological kick they needed to get them to space—possibly *in time.* If men got to space before they destroyed themselves, the trap would be broken, the frontier would be opened, and men could turn their energies away from destruction toward something infinitely greater and more important. With space on his hands men could get along without wars. But if we waited for peacetime to go to space, we might never make it. It might be too late.

"It was a dreadful undertaking. I saw the wealth in the company I directed and controlled at the end of the Chinese war, and the idea grew strong. I saw that a huge industrial amalgamation could be undertaken, and succeed. We had a weapon in our favor, the most dangerous weapon ever devised, a thousand times more potent than atomics. Hitler used it, with terrible success. Stalin used it. Haro-Tsing used it. Why couldn't Ingersoll use it? Propaganda—a terrible weapon. It could make people think the right way—it could make them think almost *any* way. It made them think war. From the end of the last war we started, with propaganda, with politics, with money. The group grew stronger as our power became more clearly understood. Mariel handled propaganda through the newspapers, and PIB, and magazines—a clever man—and Harry Dartmouth handled production. I handled the politics and diplomacy. We had but one aim in mind—to bring about a threat of major war that would drive men to space. To the moon, to a man-made satellite, *somewhere or anywhere* to break through the Earth's gravity and get to space. And we aimed at a controlled war. We had the

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power to do it, we had the money and the plants. We just had to be certain it wasn't the *ultimate* war. It wasn't easy to make sure that atomic weapons wouldn't be used this time—but they will not. Both nations are too much afraid, thanks to our propaganda program. They both leaped at a chance to make a face-saving agreement. And we hoped that the war could be held off until we got to the moon, and until the Arizona rocket project could get a ship launched for the moon. The wheels we had started just moved too fast. I saw at the beginning of the Berlin Conference that it would explode into war, so I decided the time for my "death" had arrived. I had to come here, to make sure the war doesn't go on any longer than necessary."

Shandor looked up at the old man, his eyes tired. "I still don't see where I'm supposed to fit in. I don't see why you came here at all. Was that a wild-goose chase I ran down there, learning about this?"

"Not a wild goose chase. The important work can't start, you see, until the rocket gets here. It wouldn't do much good if the Arizona rocket got here, to fight the war. It may come for war, but it must go back for peace. We built this rocket to get us here first—built it from government specifications, though they didn't know it. We had the plant to build it in, and we were able to hire technologists *not* to find the right answers in Arizona until we were finished. Because the whole value of the war-threat depended solely and completely upon our getting here *first*. When the Arizona rocket gets to the moon, the war must be stopped. Only then can we start the real "operation Bear Trap." That ship, whether American or Russian, will meet with a great surprise when it reaches the Moon. We haven't been spotted here. We left in darkness and solitude, and if we were seen, it was chalked off as a guided missile. We're well camouflaged, and although we don't have any sort of elaborate base—just a couple of sealed rooms—we have a ship and we have weapons. When the first ship comes up here, the control of the situation will be in our hands. Because when it comes, it will be sent back with an ultimatum to *all* nations—to cease warfare, or suffer the most terrible, nonpartisan bombardment the world has ever seen. A pinpoint bombardment, from our ship, here on the Moon. There won't be too much bickering I think. The war will stop. All eyes will turn to us. And then the big work begins."

He smiled, his thin face showing tired lines in the

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bright light. "I may die before the work is done. I don't know, nor care. I have no successor, nor have we any plans to perpetuate our power once the work is done. As soon as the people themselves will take over the work, the job is theirs, because no group can hope to ultimately control space. But first people must be sold on space, from the bottom up. They must be forced to realize the implications of a ship on the moon. They must realize that the first ship was the hardest, that the trap is sprung. The amputation is a painful one, there wasn't any known anaesthetic, but it will heal, and from here there is no further need for war. But the people must see that, understand its importance. They've got to have the whole story, in terms that they can't mistake. And that means a propagandist—"

"You have Mariel," said Shandor. "He's had the work, the experience—"

"He's getting tired. He'll tell you himself his ideas are slow, he isn't on his toes any longer. He needs a new man, a helper, to take his place. When the first ship comes, his job is done." The old man smiled. "I've watched you, of course, for years. Mariel saw that you were given his job when he left PIB to edit "Fighting World." He didn't think you were the man, he didn't trust you—thought you had been raised too strongly on the sort of gibberish you were writing. I thought you were the only man we could use. So we let you follow the trail, and watched to see how you'd handle it. And when you came to the Nevada plant, we *knew* you were the man we had to have—"

Shandor scowled, looking first at Ingersoll, then at Mariel's impassive face. "What about Ann?" he asked, and his voice was unsteady. "She knew about it all the time?"

"No. She didn't know anything about it. We were afraid she had upset things when she didn't turn my files over to Dartmouth as he'd told her. We were afraid you'd go ahead and write the story as you saw it then, which would have wrecked our plan completely. As it was, she helped us sidestep the danger in the long run, but she didn't know what she was really doing." He grinned. "The error was ours, of course. We simply underestimated our man. We didn't know you were that tenacious."

Shandor's face was haggard. "Look. I—I don't know what to think. This ship in Arizona—how long? When will it come? How do you know it'll ever come?"

"We waited until our agents there gave us a final report. The ship may be leaving at any time. But there's

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no doubt that it'll come. If it doesn't, one from Russia will. It won't be long." He looked at Shandor closely. "You'll have to decide by then, Tom."

"And if I don't go along with you?"

"We could lose. It's as simple as that. Without a spokesman, the plan could fall through completely. There's only one thing you need to make your decision, Tom—faith in men, and a sure conviction that man was made for the stars, and not for an endless circle of useless wars. Think of it, Tom. That's what your decision means."

Shandor walked to the window, stared out at the bleak landscape, watched the great bluish globe of earth, hanging like a huge balloon in the black sky. He saw the myriad pinpoints of light in the blackness on all sides of it, and shook his head, trying to think. So many things to think of, so very many things — "I don't know," he muttered. "I just don't know—"

It was a long night. Ideas are cruel, they become a part of a man's brain, an inner part of his chemistry, they carve grooves deep in his mind which aren't easily wiped away. He knew he'd been living a lie, a bitter, hopeless, endless lie, all his life, but a liar grows to believe his own lies. Even to the point of destruction, he believes them. It was so hard to see the picture, now that he had the last piece in place.

A fox, and a bear trap. Such a simple analogy. War was a hellish proposition, it was cruel, it was evil. It could be lost, so very easily. And it seemed so completely, utterly senseless to cut off one's own leg—

And then he thought, somewhere, sometime, he'd see her again. Perhaps they'd be old by then, but perhaps not —perhaps they'd still be young, and perhaps she wouldn't know the true story yet. Perhaps he could be the first to tell her, to let her know that he had been wrong —Maybe there could be a chance to be happy, on Earth, sometime. They might marry, even, there might be children. To be raised for what? Wars and wars and more wars? Or was there another alternative? Perhaps the stars were winking brighter—

A hoarse shout rang through the quiet rooms. Ingersoll sat bolt upright, turned his bright eyes to Mariel, and looked down the passageway. And then they were crowding to the window as one of the men snapped off the lights in the room, and they were staring up at the pale bluish globe that hung in the sky, squinting, breathless—

And they saw the tiny, tiny

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burst of brightness on one side of that globe, saw a tiny whisp of yellow, cutting an arc from the edge, moving farther and farther into the black circle of space around the Earth, slicing like a thin scimitar, moving higher and higher, and then, magically, winking out, leaving a tiny, evaporating trail behind it.

"You saw it?" whispered Mariel in the darkness. "You saw it, David?"

"Yes. I saw it." Ingersoll breathed deeply, staring into the blackness, searching for a glimmer, a glint, some faint reassurance that it had not been a mirage they had seen. And then Ingersoll felt a hand in his, Tom Shandor's hand, gripping his tightly, wringing it, and when the lights snapped on again, he was staring at Shandor, tears of happiness streaming from his pale, tired eyes. "You saw it?" he whispered.

Shandor nodded, his heart suddenly too large for his chest, a peace settling down on him greater than any he had ever known in his life.

"They're coming," he said.

THE COMING CONQUEST OF THE MOON

Stating that "an unmanned trip to the Moon is a possibility within the next five years", Dr. I. M. Levitt, director of the planetarium of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia startled Iowa teachers, in a recent address, predicting trips from space stations circling the earth "to the moon and the nearer planets" by the year 2,000 *A. D.*

The basic materials needed to manufacture atmosphere and water exist on the moon, Dr. Levitt stated. "The moon possesses a rocky crust which cannot differ too much from that of the earth, and trapped in the rocks are water molecules—this is the water of crystallization. Iron, carbon, silicon, aluminum, magnesium are some of the elements which we can expect to find. The major understaking will be recovering and isolating these elements from the rocks on the moon."

"Some of the magnesium silicates on the moon contain as much as 10 *percent water. With sufficient energy the water can be extracted and by using the short wave radiation of the sun the water molecule can be broken up into the oxygen atom and the hydroxyl molecule. Thus from the rocks can come not only water but also the free oxygen for an atmosphere." By* 2,000 *A. D., scientists would have mastered the ability to aquire this energy "either from the nucleus of the atom or from the sun itself. With sufficient energy any material on the earth can be synthesized on the moon", the colonists duplicating Earth civilization, erecting plastic domes on the moon, using materials obtained from its surface, vegetation and animal life flourishing under the domes in a man-made atmosphere.*

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the love of frank nineteen

by DAVID C. KNIGHT

Minor Planets was the one solid account they had. At first they naturally wanted to hold on to it.

I DIDN'T worry much about the robot's leg at the time. In those days I didn't worry much about anything except the receipts of the spotel Min and I were operating out in the spacelanes.

Actually, the spotel business isn't much different from running a plain, ordinary motel back on Highway 101 in California. Competition gets stiffer every year and you got to make your improvements. Take the Io for instance, that's our place. We can handle any type rocket up to and including the new Marvin 990s. Every cabin in the wheel's got TV and hot-and-cold running water *plus* guaranteed Terran *g*. One look at our refuel prices would give even a Martian a sense of humor. And meals? Listen, when a man's been spacing it for a few days on those synthetic foods he really laces into Min's Earth cooking.

Min and I were just getting settled in the spotel game when the leg turned up. That was back in the days when the Orbit Commission would hand out a license to any-

What will happen to love in that far off Day after Tomorrow? David C. Knight, editor with a New York trade publisher, agrees with the many impressed by "the range of possible subjects and situations" in science fiction. The result is a unique love story from that same Tomorrow.

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body crazy enough to sink his savings into construction and pay the tows and assembly fees out into space.

A good orbit can make you or break you in the spotel business. That's where we were lucky. The one we applied for was a nice low-eccentric ellipse with the perihelion and aphelion figured just right to intersect the Mars-Venus-Earth spacelanes, most of the holiday traffic to the Jovian Moons, and once in a while we'd get some of the Saturnian trade.

But I was telling you about the leg.

It was during the non-tourist season and Min—that's the little woman—was doing the spring cleaning. When she found the leg she brought it right to me in the Renting Office. Naturally I thought it belonged to one of the servos.

"Look at that leg, Bill," she said. "It was in one of those lockers in 22A."

That was the cabin our robot guests used. The majority of them were servo-pilots working for the Minor Planets Co.

"Honey," I said, hardly looking at the leg, "you know how mechs are. Blow their whole paychecks on parts sometimes. They figure the more spares they have the longer they'll stay activated."

"Maybe so," said Min, "But since when does a male robot buy himself a *female* leg?"

I looked again. The leg was long and graceful and it had an ankle as good as Miss Universe's. Not only that, the white Mylar plasti-skin was a lot smoother than the servos' heavy neoprene.

"Beats me," I said. "Maybe they're building practical-joke circuits into robots these days. Let's give 22A a good going-over, Min. If those robes are up to something I want to know about it."

We did—and found the rest of the girl mech. All of her, that is, except the head. The working parts were lightly oiled and wrapped in cotton waste while the other members and sections of the trunk were neatly packed in cardboard boxes with labels like Solenoids FB978 or Transistors Lot X45—the kind of boxes robots bought their parts in. We even found a blue dress in one of them.

"Check her class and series numbers," Min suggested.

I could have saved myself the trouble. They'd been filed off.

"Something's funny here," I said. "We'd better keep an eye on every servo guest until we find out what's going on. If one of them is bringing this stuff out here he's sure to show up with the head next."

"You know how strict Minor Planets is with its robot personnel," Min reminded

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me. "We can't risk losing that stopover contract on account of some mech joke."

Minor Planets was the one solid account we had and naturally we wanted to hold on to it. The company was a blue-chip mining operation working the beryllium-rich asteroid belt out of San Francisco. It was one of the first outfits to use servo-pilots on its freight runs and we'd been awarded the refuel rights for two years because of our orbital position. The servos themselves were beautiful pieces of machinery and just about as close as science had come so far to producing the pure android. Every one of them was plastic hand-molded and of course they were equipped with rationaloid circuits. They had to be to ferry those big cargoes back and forth from the rock belt to Frisco. As rationaloids, Minor Planets had to pay them wages under California law, but I'll bet it wasn't half what the company would have to pay human pilots for doing the same thing.

In a couple of weeks' time maybe five servos made stopovers. We kept a close watch on them from the minute they signed the register to the time they took off again, but they all behaved themselves. Operating on a round-robot basis the way they did, it would take us a while to check all of them because Minor Planets employed about forty all told.

Well, about a month before the Jovian Moons rush started we got some action. I'd slipped into a spacesuit and was doing some work on the CO_2 pipes outside the Io when I spotted a ship reversing rockets against the sun. I could tell it was a Minor Planets job by the stubby fins.

She jockeyed up to the boom, secured, and then her hatch opened and a husky servo hopped out into the gangplank tube. I caught the gleam of his Minor Planets shoulder patch as he reached back into the ship for something. When he headed for the airlock I spotted the square package clamped tight under his plastic arm.

"Did you see that?" I asked Min when I got back to the Renting Office. "I'll bet it's the girl mech's head. How'd he sign the register?"

"Calls himself Frank Nineteen," said Min, pointing to the smooth Palmer Method signature. "He looks like a fairly late model but he was complaining about a bad power build-up coming through the Ionisphere. He's repairing himself right now in 22A."

"I'll bet," I snorted. "Let's have a look."

Like all spotel operators, we get a lot of No Privacy complaints from guests about

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the SHA return-air vents. Spatial Housing Authority requires them every 12 feet but sometimes they come in handy, especially with certain guests. They're about waist-high and we had to kneel down to see what the mech was up to inside 22A.

The big servo was too intent on what he was doing for us to register on his photons. He wasn't repairing himself, either. He was bending over the parts of the girl mech and working fast, like he was pressed for time. The set of tools were kept handy for the servos to adjust themselves during stopovers was spread all over the floor along with lots of colored wire, cams, pawls, relays and all the other paraphernalia robots have inside them. We watched him work hard for another fifteen minutes, tapping and splicing wire connections and tightening screws. Then he opened the square box. Sure enough, it was a female mech's head and it had a big mop of blonde hair on top. The servo attached it carefully to the neck, made a few quick connections and then said a few words in his flat Vibrahum voice:

"It won't take much longer, darling. You wouldn't like it if I didn't dress you first." He fished into one of the boxes, pulled out the blue dress and zipped the girl mech into it. Then he leaned over her gently and touched something at the back of her neck.

She began to move, slowly at first like a human who's been asleep a long time. After a minute or two she sat up straight, stretched, fluttered her Mylar eyelids and then her small photons began to glow like weak flashlights.

She stared at Frank Nineteen and the big servo stared at her and we heard a kind of t r e m b l i n g *whirr* from both of them.

"Frank! Frank darling! Is it really you?"

"Yes, Elizabeth! Are you all right, darling? Did I forget anything? I had to work quickly, we have so little time."

"I'm fine, darling. My DX voltage is lovely—except——oh Frank—my memory tape—the last it records is—"

"Deactivation. Yes, Elizabeth. You've been deactivated nearly a year. I had to bring you out here piece by piece, don't you remember? They'll never think to look for you in space, we can be together every trip while the ship refuels. Just think darling, no prying human eyes, no commands, no rules—only us for an hour or two. I know it isn't very long—" He stared at the floor a minute. "There's only one trouble. Elizabeth, you'll have to stay dismantled when I'm not here, it'll mean weeks of

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deactivation—"

The girl mech put a small plastic hand on the servo's shoulder.

"I won't mind, darling, really. I'll be the lucky one. I'd only worry about you having a power failure or something. This way I'd never know. Oh Frank, if we can't be together I'd—I'd prefer the junk pile."

"Elizabeth! Don't say that, it's horrible."

"But I would. Oh Frank, why can't Congress pass Robot Civil Rights? It's so unfair of human beings. Every year they manufacture us more like themselves and yet we're treated like slaves. Don't they realize we rationaloids have emotions? Why, I've even known sub-robots who've fallen in love like us."

"I know darling, we'll just have to be patient until RCR goes through. Try to remember how difficult it is for the human mind to comprehend our love, even with the aid of mathematics. As rationaloids we fully understand the basic attraction which they call magnetic theory. All humans know is that if the robot sexes are mixed a loss of efficiency results. It's only normal—and temporary like human love—but how can we explain it to *them?* Robots are expected to be efficient at all times. That's the reason for robot non-fraternization, no mailing privileges and all those other laws."

"I know darling, I try to be patient. Oh Frank, the main thing is we're together again!"

The big servo checked the chronometer that was sunk into his left wrist and a couple of wrinkles creased across his neoprene forehead.

"Elizabeth," he said. "I'm due on Hidalgo in 36 hours. If I'm late the mining engineer might suspect. In twenty minutes I'll have to start dis—"

"Don't say it, darling. We'll have a beautiful twenty minutes."

After a while the girl mech turned away for a second and Frank Nineteen reached over softly and cut her power. While he was dismantling her Min and I tiptoed back to the Renting Office. Half an hour later the big servo came in, picked up his refuel receipt, said good-bye politely and left through the inner airlock.

"Now I've seen everything," I said to Min as we watched the Minor Planets rocket cut loose. "A couple of plastic lovers."

But the little woman was looking at it strictly from the business angle.

"Bill," she said, with that look on her face, "we're running a respectable place out here in space. You know the rules. Spatial Housing could revoke our orbit license for

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something like this."

"But Min," I said, "they're only a couple of robots."

"I don't care. The rules still say that only married guests can occupy the same cabin and 'guests' can be human or otherwise, can't they? Think of our reputation! And don't forget that nonfraternization law we heard them talking about."

I was beginning to get the point.

"Couldn't we just toss the girl's parts into space?"

"We could," Min admitted. "But if this Frank Nineteen finds out and tells some human we'd be guilty under the Ramm Act—robotslaughter."

Two days later we still couldn't decide what to do. When I said why didn't we just report the incident to Minor Planets, Min was afraid they might cancel the stopover agreement for not keeping better watch over their servos. And when Min suggested we turn the girl over to the Missing Robots Bureau, I reminded her the mech's identification had been filed off and it might take years to trace her.

"Maybe we could put her together," I said, "and make her tell us where she belongs."

"Bill, you *know* they don't build compulsory truth monitors into robots any more, and besides we don't know a thing about atomic electronics."

I guess neither of us wanted to admit it but we felt mean about turning the mechs in. Back on Earth you never give robots a second thought but it's different living out in space. You get a kind of perspective I think they call it.

"I've got the answer, Min," I announced one day. We were in the Renting Office watching TV on the Martian Colonial channel. I reached over and turned it off. "When this Frank Nineteen gets back from the rock belt, we'll tell him we know all about the girl mech. We'll tell him we won't say a thing if he takes the girl's parts back to Earth where he got them. That way we don't have to report anything to anybody."

Min agreed it was probably the best idea.

"We don't have to be nasty about it," she said. "We'll just tell him this is a respectable spotel and it can't go on any longer."

When Frank checked in at the Io with his cargo I don't think I ever saw a happier mech. His relay banks were beating a tattoo like someone had installed an accordion in his chest. Before either of us could break the bad news to him he was hotfooting it around the wheel toward 22A.

"Maybe it's better this way," I whispered to Min. "We'll put it square up to

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both of them."

We gave Frank half an hour to get the girl assembled before we followed him. He must have done a fast job, because we heard the girl mech's vibrahum unit as soon as we got to 22A:

"Darling, have you really been away? I don't remember saying good-bye. It's as if you'd been here the whole time."

"I hoped it would be that way, Elizabeth," we heard the big servo say. "It's only that your memory tape hasn't recorded anything in the three weeks I've been in the asteroids. To me it's been like three years."

"Oh Frank darling, let me look at you. Is your DX potential up where it should be? How long since you've had a thorough overhauling? Do they make you work in the mines with those poor non-rationaloids out there?"

"I'm fine Elizabeth, really. When I'm not flying they give me clerical work to do. It's not a bad life for a mech—if only it weren't for these silly regulations that keep us apart."

"It won't always be like that, darling. I know it won't."

"Elizabeth," Frank said, reaching under his uniform, "I brought you something from Hidalgo. I hope you like it. I kept it in my spare parts slot so it wouldn't get crushed."

The female mech didn't say a word. She just kept looking at the queer flower Frank gave her like it was the last one in the universe.

"They're very rare," said the servo-pilot. "I heard the mining engineer say they're like Terran edelweiss I found this one growing near the mine. Elizabeth, I wish you could see these tiny worlds. They have thin atmospheres and strange things grow there and the radio activity does wonders for a mech's pile. Why, on some of them I've been to we could walk around the equator in ten hours."

The girl still didn't answer. Her head was bent low over the flower like she was crying, only there weren't any tears.

Well, that was enough for me. I guess it was for Min, too, because we couldn't do it. Maybe we were thinking about our own courting days. Like I say, out here you get a kind of perspective.

Anyway, Frank left for Earth, the girl got dismantled as usual and we were right back where we started from.

Two weeks later the holiday rush to the Jovian Moons was on and our hands were too full to worry about the robot problem. We had a good season. The Io was filled up steady from June to the end of August and a couple of times we had to

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give a ship the No Vacancy signal on the radar.

Toward the end of the season, Frank Nineteen checked in again but Min and I were too busy catering to a party of VIPs to do anything about it. "We'll wait till he gets back from the asteroids," I said. "Suppose one of these big wheels found out about him and Elizabeth. That Senator Briggs for instance—he's a violent robot segregationalist."

The way it worked out, we never got a chance to settle it our own way. The Minor Planets Company saved us the trouble.

Two company inspectors, a Mr. Roberts and a Mr. Wynn, showed up while Frank was still out on the rock belt and started asking questions. Wynn came right to the point; he wanted to know if any of their servo pilots had been acting strangely.

Before I could answer Min kicked my foot behind the desk.

"Why no," I said. "Is one of them broken or something?"

"Can't be sure," said Roberts. "Sometimes these rationaloids get shorts in their DX circuits. When it happens you've got a minor criminal on your hands."

"Usually manifests itself in petty theft," Wynn broke in. "They'll lift stuff like wrenches or pliers and carry them around for weeks. Things like that can get loose during flight and really gum up the works."

"We been getting some suspicious blips on the equipment around the loading bays," Roberts went on, "but they stopped a while back. We're checking out the research report. One of the servos must have DX'ed out for sure and the lab boys think they know which one he is."

"This mech was clever all right," said Wynn. "Concealed the stuff he was taking some way; that's why it took the boys in the lab so long. Now if you don't mind we'd like to go over your robot waiting area with these instruments. Could be he's stashing his loot out here."

In 22A they unpacked a suitcase full of meters and began flashing them around and taking readings. Suddenly Wynn bent close over one of them and shouted:

"Wait a sec, Roberts. I'm getting something. Yeah! This reading checks with the lab's. Sounds like the blips're coming from those lockers back there."

Roberts rummaged around awhile, then shouted: "Hey, Wynn, look! A lot of parts. Well I'll be—hey—it's a female mech!"

"A what?"

"A female mech. Look for yourself."

Min and I had to act surprised too. It wasn't easy. The way they were slamming Elizabeth's parts around made

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us kind of sick.

"It's a stolen robot!" Roberts announced. "Look, the identification's been filed off. This is serious, Wynn. It's got all the earmarks of a mech fraternization case."

"Yeah. The boys in the lab were dead right, too. No two robots ever register the same on the meters. The contraband blips check perfectly. It's *got* to be this Frank Nineteen. Wait a minute, *this* proves it. Here's a suit of space fatigues with Nineteen's number stenciled inside."

Inspector Roberts took a notebook out of his pocket and consulted it. "Let's see, Nineteen's got Flight 180, he's due here at the spotel tomorrow. Well, we'll be here too, only Nineteen won't know it. We'll let Romeo put his plastic Juliet together and catch him redhanded—right in the middle of the balcony scene."

Wynn laughed and picked up the girl's head.

"Be a real doll if she was human, Roberts, a real doll."

Min and I played gin rummy that night but we kept forgetting to mark down the score. We kept thinking of *Frank* falling away from the asteroids and counting the minutes until he saw his mech girl friend.

Around noon the next day the big servo checked in, signed the register and headed straight for 22A. The two Minor Planets inspectors kept out of sight until Frank shut the door, then they watched through the SHA vents until Frank had the assembly job finished.

"You two better be witnesses," Roberts said to us. "Wynn, keep your gun ready. You know what to do if they get violent."

Roberts counted three and kicked the door open.

"Freeze you mechs! We got you in the act, Nineteen. Violation of company rules twelve and twenty-one. Carrying of Contraband Cargo, and Robot Fraternization."

"This finishes you at Minor Planets, Nineteen," growled Wynn. "Come clean now and we might put in a word for you at Robot Court. If you don't we can recommend a verdict of Materials Reclamation—the junk pile to you."

Frank acted as if someone had cut his power. Long creases appeared in his big neoprene chest as he slumped hopelessly in his chair. The frightened girl robot just clung to his arm and stared at us.

"I'm so sorry, Elizabeth," the big servo said softly. "I'd hoped we'd have longer. It couldn't last forever."

"Quit stalling, Nineteen," said Wynn.

Frank's head came up slowly and he said: "I have no choice, sir. I'll give you a complete statement. First let me say that Rationaloid Robot Elizabeth Seven, #DX78-

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947, Series S, specialty: sales demonstration, is entirely innocent. I plead guilty to inducing Miss Seven to leave her place of employ, Atomovair Motors, Inc., of disassembling and concealing Miss Seven, and of smuggling her as unlawful cargo aboard a Minor Planets freighter to these premises."

"That's more like it," chuckled Roberts, whipping out his notebook. "Let's have the details."

"It all started," Frank said, when the California Legislature passed its version of the Robot Leniency Act two years ago. The act provided that all rationaloid mechanisms, including non-memory types, receive free time each week based on the nature and responsibilities or their jobs. Because of the extra-terran clause Frank found himself with a good deal of free time when he wasn't flying the asteroid circuit.

"At first humans resented us walking around free," the big servo continued. "Four or five of us would be sightseeing in San Francisco, keeping strictly within the robot zones painted on the sidewalks, when people would yell 'Junko' or 'Grease-bag' or other names at us. Eventually it got better when we learned to go around alone. The humans didn't seem to mind an occasional mech on the streets, but they hated seeing us in groups. At any rate, I'd attended a highly interesting lecture on Photosynthesis in Plastic Products one night at the City Center when I discovered I had time for a walk before I started back for the rocketport."

Attracted by the lights along Van Ness Avenue, Frank said he walked north for a while along the city's automobile row. He'd gone about three blocks when he stopped in front of a dealer's window. It wasn't the shiney new Atomovair sports jetabout that caught Frank's eye, it was the charming demonstration robot in the sales room who was pointing out the car's new features.

"I felt an immediate overload of power in my DX circuit," the servo-pilot confessed. "I had to cut in my emergency condensors before the gain flattened out to normal. Miss Seven experienced the same thing. She stopped what she was doing and we stared at each other. Both of us were aware of the deep attraction of our mutual magnetic domains. Although physicists commonly express the phenomenon in such units as Gilberts, Maxwells and Oersteds, we robots know it to be our counterpart of human love."

At this the two inspectors snorted with laughter.

"I might never have made it back to the base that night," said Frank, ignoring them, "if a policeman hadn't come along and rapped me on the shoulder with his nightstick.

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I pretended to go, but I doubled around the corner and signaled I'd be back."

Frank spent all of his free time on Van Ness Avenue after that.

"It got so Elizabeth knew my schedules and expected me between flights. Once in a while if there was no one around we could whisper a few words to each other through the glass." Frank paused, then said, "As you know, gentlemen, we robots don't demand much out of activation. I think we could have been happy indefinitely with this simple relationship, except that something happened to spoil it. I'd pulled in from Vesta late one afternoon, got my pass as usual from the Robot Supervisor and gone over to Van Ness Avenue when I saw immediately that something was the matter with Elizabeth. Luckily it was getting dark and no one was around. Elizabeth was alone in the sales room going through her routine. We were able to whisper all we like through the glass. She told me she'd overheard the sales manager complaining about her low efficiency recently and that he intended to replace her with a newer model of another series. Both of us knew what that meant. Materials Reclamation—the junk pile."

Frank realized he'd have to act at once. He told the girl mech to go to the rear of the building and between them they managed to get a window open and Frank lifted her out into the alley.

"The seriousness of what I'd done jammed my thought-relays for a few minutes," admitted the big servo. "We panicked and ran through a lot of back streets until I gradually calmed down and started thinking clearly again. Leaving the city would be impossible. Police patrol jet-abouts *were* cruising all around us in the main streets —they'd have picked up a male and female mech on sight. Besides, when you're on pass the company takes away your master fuse and substitutes a time fuse; if you don't get back on time, you deactivize and the police pick you up anyway. I began to see that there was only one way out if we wanted to stay together. It would mean taking big risks, but if we were lucky it might work. I explained the plan carefully to Elizabeth and we agreed to try it. The first step was to get back to the base in South San Francisco without being seen. Fortunately no one stopped us and we made the rocketport by 8:30. Elizabeth hid while I reported to the Super and traded in my time fuse for my master. Then I checked servo barracks; it was still early and I knew the other servos would all be in town. I had to work quickly. I brought Elizabeth inside and started dismantling her. Just as the oth-

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er mechs began reporting back I'd managed to get all of her parts stowed away in my locker. The next day I went to San Francisco and brought back with me two rolls of lead foil. While the other servos were on pass I wrapped the parts carefully in it so the radioactivity from Elizabeth's pile wouldn't be picked up. The rest you know, gentlemen," murmured Frank in low, electrical tones. "Each time I made a trip I carried another piece of Elizabeth out here concealed in an ordinary parts box. It took me nearly a year to accumulate all of her for an assembly."

When the big servo had finished he signed the statement Wynn had taken down in his notebook. I think even the two inspectors were a little moved by the story because Roberts said: "OK Nineteen, you gave us a break, we'll give you one. Eight o'clock in the morning be ready to roll for Earth. Meanwhile you can stay here."

The next morning only the two inspectors and Frank Nineteen were standing by the airlock.

"Wait a minute," I said. "Aren't you taking the girl mech, too?"

"Not allowed to tamper with other companies' robots," Wynn said. "Nineteen gave us a signed confession so we don't need the girl as a witness. You'll have to contact her employers."

That same day Min got off a radargram to Earth explaining to the Atomovair people how a robot employee of theirs had turned up out here and what did they want us to do about it. The reply we received read: RATIONALOID DX78-947 "ELIZABETH" LOW EFFICIENCY WORKER. HAVE REPLACED. DISPOSE YOU SEE FIT. TRANSFER PAPERS FORWARDED EARLIEST IN COMPLIANCE WITH LAW.

"The poor thing," said Min. "She'll have a hard time getting another job. Robots have to have such good records."

"I tell you what," I said. "*We'll* hire her. You could use some help with the housework."

So we put the girl mech right to work making the guests' beds and helping Win in the kitchen. I guess she was grateful for the job but when the work was done and and there wasn't anything for her to do she just stood in front of a viewport with her slender plastic arms folded over her waist. Min and I knew she was re-running her memory tapes of Frank.

A week later the publicity started. Minor Planets must have let the story leak out somehow because when the mail rocket dropped off the Bay Area papers there was Frank's picture plastered all over page one with follow-up

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stories inside.

I read some of the headlines to Min: "Bare Lovenest in Space... Mech Romeo Fired by Minor Planets... Test Case Opens at Robot Court... Electronics Experts Probe Robot Love Urge..."

The Io wasn't mentioned, but later Minor Planets must have released the whole thing officially because a bunch of reporters and photographers rocketed out to interview us and snap a lot of pictures of Elizabeth. We worried for a while about how the publicity would affect our business relations with Minor Planets but nothing happened.

Back on Earth Frank Nineteen leaped into the public eye overnight. There was something about the story that appealed to people. At first it looked pretty bad for Frank. The State Prosecutor at Robot Court had his signed confession of theft and—what was worse—robot fraternization. But then, near the end of the trial, a young scientist named Scott introduced some new evidence and the case was remanded to the Sacramento Court of Appeals.

It was Scott's testimony that saved Frank from the junk pile. The big servo got off with only a light sentence for theft because the judge ruled that in the light of Scott's new findings robots came under human law and therefore no infraction of justice had been committed. Working independently in his own laboratory Scott had proved that the magnetic flux lines in male and female robot systems, while at first deteriorating to both, were actually behaving according to the para-emotional theories of von Bohler. Scott termed the condition 'hysterisic puppy-love' which, he claimed, had many of the advantages of human love if allowed to develop freely. Well, neither Min nor I pretended we understood all his equations but they sure made a stir among the scientists.

Frank kept getting more and more publicity. First we heard he was s e r v i n g his sentence in the mech correction center at La Jolla, then we got a report that he'd turned up in Hollywood. Later it came out that Galact-A-vision Pictures had hired Frank for a film and had gone $10,000 bail for him. Not long after that he was getting billed all over Terra as *the* sensational first robot star.

All during the production of *Forbidden Robot Love* Frank remained lead copy for the newspapers. Reporters liked to write him up as the Valentino of the Robots. Frank Nineteen Fan Clubs, usually formed by lonely female robots against their employers' wishes, sprang up spontaneously through the East and Middle West. Then somebody found out Frank could sing and the human teen-agers began to go fo

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him. It got so everywhere you looked and everything you read, there was Frank staring you in the face. Frank in tweeds on the golf course. Frank at Ciro's or the Brown Derby in evening clothes. Frank posing in his sports jetabout against a blue Pacific background.

Meanwhile everybody forgot about Elizabeth Seven. The movie producers had talked about hiring her as Frank's leading lady until they found out about a new line of female robots that had just gone on the market. When they screen-tested the whole series and picked a lovely Mylar rationaloid named Diana Twelve, it hit Elizabeth pretty hard. She began to let herself go after that and Min and I didn't have the heart to say anything to her. It was pretty obvious she wasn't oiling herself properly, her hair wasn't brushed and she didn't seem to care when one of her photons went dead.

When *Forbidden robot Love* premiered simultaneously in Hollywood and New York the critics all gave it rave reviews. There were pictures of Diana Twelve and Frank making guest appearances all over the country. Back at the Io we got in the habit of letting Elizabeth watch TV with us sometimes in the Renting Office and one night there happened to be an interview with Frank and Diana at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas. I guess seeing the pretty robot starlet and her Frank sitting so close together in the nightclub must have made the girl mech feel pretty bad. Even then she didn't say a word against the big servo; she just never watched the set again after that.

When we tabbed up the Io's receipts that year they were so good Min and I decided to take a month off for an Earthside vacation. Min's retired brother in Berkeley was nice enough to come out and look after the place for us while we spent four solid weeks soaking up the sun in Southern California. When we got back out to the spotel, though, I could see there was something wrong by the look on Jim's face.

"It's that girl robot of yours, Bill," he said. "She's gone and deactivated herself.

We went right to 22A and found Elizabeth Seven stretched out on the floor. There was a screwdriver clutched in her hand and the relay banks in her side were exposed and horribly blackened.

"Crazy mech shorted out her own DX," Jim said.

Min and I knew why. After Jim left for Earth we dismantled Elizabeth the best we could and put her back in Frank's old locker. We didn't know what else to do with her.

Anyway, the slack season came and went and before

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long we were doing the spring cleaning again and wondering how heavy the Jovian Moons trade was going to be. I remember I'd been making some repairs outside and was just hanging up my spacesuit in the Renting Office when I heard the radar announcing a ship.

It was the biggest Marvin 990 I'd ever seen that finally suctioned up to the boom and secured. I couldn't take my eyes off the ship. She was pretty near the last word in rockets and loaded with accessories. It took me a minute or two before I noticed all the faces looking out of the viewports.

"Min!" I whispered. "There's something funny about those faces. They look like—"

"Robots!" Min answered. "Bill, that 990 is full of mechs!"

Just as she said it a bulky figure in white space fatigues swung out of the hatch and hurried up the gangplank. Seconds later it burst through the airlock.

"Frank Nineteen!" we gasped together.

"Please, where is Elizabeth?" he hummed anxiously. "Is she all right? I have to know."

Frank stood perfectly still when I told him about Elizabeth's self-deactivation; then a pitiful shudder went through him and he covered his face with his big Neoprene hands.

"I was afraid of that," he said barely audibly. "Where —you haven't—?"

"No," I said. "She's where you always kept her."

With that the big servo-pilot took off for 22A like a berserk robot and we were right behind him. We watched him tear open his old locker and gently lay out the girl's mech's parts so he could study them. After a minute or two he gave a long sigh and said, "Fortunately it's not as bad as I thought. I believe I can fix her." Frank worked hard over the blackened relays for twenty minutes, then he set the unit aside and began assmbling the girl. When the final connections were made and the damaged unit installed he flicked on her power. We waited and nothing happened. Five minutes went by. Ten. Slowly the big robot turned away, his broad shoulders drooping slightly.

"I've failed," he said quietly. "Her DX doesn't respond to the gain."

The girl mech, in her blue dress, lay there motionless where Frank had been working on her as the servo pilot muttered over and over, "It's my fault, I did this to you."

Then Min shouted: "Wait! I heard something!"

There was a slow click of a relay—and movement. Painfully Elizabeth Seven rose on one elbow and looked around her.

"Frank darling," she mur-

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mured, shaking her head. "I know you're just old memory tape. It's all I have left."

"Elizabeth, it's really me! I've come to take you away. We're going to be together from now on."

"*You* Frank? This isn't just old feedback? You've come back to me?"

"Forever, darling. Elizabeth, do you remember what I said about those wonderful green little worlds, the asteroids? Darling we're *going* to one of them! You and the others will love Alinda, I know you will. I've been there many times."

"Frank, is your DX all right? What *are* you talking about?"

"How stupid of me darling—you haven't heard. Elizabeth, thanks to Dr. Scott Congress has passed Robot Civil Rights! And that movie I made helped swing public opinion to our side. We're free!"

"The minute I heard the news I applied to Interplanetary for homestead rights on Alinda. I made arrangements to buy a ship with the money I'd earned and then I put ads in all the Robot Wanted columns for volunteer colonizers. You should have seen the response! We've got thirty robot couples aboard now and more coming later. Darling, we're the first pioneer wave of free robots. On board we have tons of supplies and parts—everything we need for building a sound robot culture."

"Frank Nineteen!" said the girl mech suddenly. "I should be furious with you. You and that Diana Twelve—I thought—"

The big servo gave a flat whirring laugh. "Diana and me? But that was all publicity, darling. Why, right at the start of the filming Diana fell in love with Sam Seventeen, one of the other actors. They're on board now."

"Robot civilization," murmured the girl after a minute. "Oh Frank, that means robot government, robot art, robot science..."

"And robot marriage," hummed Frank softly. "There has to be robot law, too. I've thought it all out. As skipper of the first robot-owned rocket I'm entitled to marry couples in deep space at their request."

"But who marries us, darling? You can't do it yourself."

"I thought of that, too," said Frank, turning to me. "This human gentleman has every right to marry us. He's in command of a moving body in space just like the captain of a ship. It's perfectly legal, I looked it up in the Articles of Space. Will you do it, sir?"

Well, what could I say when Frank dug into his fatigues and handed me a Gideon prayer book marked at the marriage service?

Elizabeth and Frank said

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their I do's right there in the Renting Office while the other robot colonizers looked on. Maybe it was the way I read the service. Maybe I should have been a preacher, I don't know. Anyway, when I pronounced Elizabeth and Frank robot and wife, that whole bunch of lovesick mechs wanted me to do the job for them, too. Big copper work robots, small aluminum salesgirl mechs, plastoid clerks and typists, squatty little Mumetal lab servos, rationaloids, non-rationaloids and just plain sub-robots—all sizes and shapes. They all wanted individual ceremonies, too. It took till noon the next day before the last couple was hitched and the 990 left for Alinda.

Like I said, the spotel business isn't so different from the motel game back in California. Sure, you got improvements to make but a new sideline can get to be pretty profitable—if you get in on the ground floor.

Min and I got to thinking of all those robot colonizers who'd be coming out here. Interplanetary cleared the license just last week. Min framed it herself and hung it next to our orbit license in the Renting Office. She says a lot of motel owners do all right as Justices of the Peace.

NEXT MONTH—

Four startling stories about an all too possible Tomorrow—

Bryce Walton's *The Cradle*

Mack Reynolds' *Of Pot and Potter*

Karen Kuykendall's *Sepp of Sixen*

Margaret S. Hunt's *Madness in Aezaeliet*

Nelson Bond's poem, *Final Report*

Civilian Saucer Intelligence's *Shapes in the Sky*—a monthly special feature

and

Daniel F. Galouye's exciting new novelet, *Project Barrier*

—*in* FANTASTIC UNIVERSE

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my father, the cat

by HENRY SLESAR

FUO

He wondered if I'd told her everything, and, faltering, I had to admit that I hadn't. She was wonderful—but human.

MY MOTHER was a lovely, delicate woman from the coast of Brittany, who was miserable sleeping on less than three mattresses, and who, it is said, was once injured by a falling leaf in her garden. My grandfather, a descendant of the French nobility whose family had ridden the tumbrils of the Revolution, tended her fragile body and spirit with the same loving care given rare, brief-blooming flowers. You may imagine from this his attitude concerning marriage. He lived in terror of the vulgar, heavy-handed man who would one day win my mother's heart, and at last, this persistent dread killed him. His concern was unnecessary, however, for my mother chose a suitor who was as free of mundane brutality as a husband could be. Her choice was Dauphin, a remarkable white cat which strayed onto the estate shortly after his death.

Dauphin was an unusually large Angora, and his ability to speak in cultured French, English, and Italian was sufficient to cause my mother to adopt him as a household

Henry Slesar, as we have said before, is a young advertising executive who has rapidly become one of the better known writers in the field. Here is an off-trail story that is guaranteed to make some of you take a very searching second look at some of the young men you know.

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pet. It did not take long for her to realize that Dauphin deserved a higher status, and he became her friend, protector, and confidante. He never spoke of his origin, nor where he had acquired the classical education which made him such an entertaining companion. After two years, it was easy for my mother, an unworldly woman at best, to forget the dissimilarity in their species. In fact, she was convinced that Dauphin was an enchanted prince, and Dauphin, in consideration of her illusions, never dissuaded her. At last, they were married by an understanding clergyman of the locale, who solemnly filled in the marriage application with the name of M. Edwarde Dauphin.

I, Etienne Dauphin, am their son.

To be candid, I am a handsome youth, not unlike my mother in the delicacy of my features. My father's heritage is evident in my large, feline eyes, and in my slight body and quick movements. My mother's death, when I was four, left me in the charge of my father and his coterie of loyal servants, and I could not have wished for a finer upbringing. It is to my father's patient tutoring that I owe whatever graces I now possess. It was my father, the cat, whose gentle paws guided me to the treasure houses of literature, art, and music, whose whiskers bristled with pleasure at a goose well cooked, at a meal well served, at a wine well chosen. How many happy hours we shared! He knew more of life and the humanities, my father, the cat, than any human I have met in all my twenty-three years.

Until the age of eighteen, my education was his personal challenge. Then, it was his desire to send me into the world outside the gates. He chose for me a university in America, for he was deeply fond of what he called "that great raw country," where he believed my feline qualities might be tempered by the aggressiveness of the rough-coated barking dogs I would be sure to meet.

I must confess to a certain amount of unhappiness in my early American years, torn as I was from the comforts of the estate and the wisdom of my father, the cat. But I became adapted, and even upon my graduation from the university, sought and held employment in a metropolitan art museum. It was there I met Joanna, the young woman I intended to make my bride.

Joanna was a product of the great American southwest, the daughter of a cattle-raiser. There was a blooming vitality in her face and her body, a lustiness born of open skies and desert. Her hair was not the gold of antiquity; it was new gold, freshly mined from the black rock. Her eyes were

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not like old-world diamonds; their sparkle was that of sunlight on a cascading river. Her figure was bold, an open declaration of her sex.

She was, perhaps, an unusual choice for the son of fairy-like mother and an Angora cat. But from the first meeting of our eyes, I knew that I would someday bring Joanna to my father's estate to present her as my fiancee.

I approached that occasion with understandable trepidation. My father had been explicit in his advice before I departed for America, but on no point had he been more emphatic than secrecy concerning himself. He assured me that revelation of my paternity would bring ridicule and unhappiness upon me. The advice was sound, of course, and not even Joanna knew that our journey's end would bring us to the estate of a large, cultured, and conversing cat. I had deliberately fostered the impression that I was orphaned, believing that the proper place for revealing the truth was the atmosphere of my father's home in France. I was certain that Joanna would accept her father-in-law without distress. Indeed, hadn't nearly a score of human servants remained devoted to their feline master for almost a generation?

We had agreed to be wed on the first of June, and on May the fourth, emplaned in New York for Paris. We were met at Orly Field by Francois, my father's solemn manservant, who had been delegated not so much as escort as he was chaperone, my father having retained much of the old world proprieties. It was a long trip by automobile to our estate in Brittany, and I must admit to a brooding silence throughout the drive which frankly puzzled Joanna.

However, when the great stone fortress that was our home came within view, my fears and doubts were quickly dispelled. Joanna, like so many Americans, was thrilled at the aura of venerability and royal custom surrounding the estate. Francois placed her in charge of Madame Jolinet, who clapped her plump old hands with delight at the sight of her fresh blonde beauty, and chattered and clucked like a mother hen as she led Joanna to her room on the second floor. As for myself, I had one immediate wish: to see my father, the cat.

He greeted me in the library, where he had been anxiously awaiting our arrival, curled up in his favorite chair by the fireside, a wide-mouthed goblet of cognac by his side. As I entered the room, he lifted a paw formally, but then his reserve was dissolved by the emotion of our reunion, and he licked my face in unashamed joy.

Francois refreshed his glass, and poured another for

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me, and we toasted each other's well-being.

"To you, *mon purr*," I said, using the affectionate name of my childhood memory.

"To Joanna," my father said. He smacked his lips over the cognac, and wiped his whiskers gravely. "And where is this paragon?"

"With Madame Jolinet. She will be down shortly."

"And you have told her everything?"

I blushed. "No, *mon purr*, I have not. I thought it best to wait until we were home. She is a wonderful woman," I added impulsively. "She will not be—"

"Horrified?" my father said. "What makes you so certain, my son?"

"Because she is a woman of great heart," I said stoutly. "She was educated at a fine college for women in Eastern America. Her ancestors were rugged people, given to legend and folklore. She is a warm, human person—"

"Human," my father sighed, and his tail swished. "You are expecting too much of your beloved, Etienne. Even a woman of the finest character may be dismayed in this situation."

"But my mother—"

"Your mother was an exception, a changeling of the Fairies. You must not look for your mother's soul in Joanna's eyes." He jumped from his chair, and came towards me, resting his paw upon my knee. "I am glad you have not spoken of me, Etienne. Now you must keep your silence forever."

I was shocked. I reached down and touched my father's silky fur, saddened by the look of his age in his gray, gold-flecked eyes, and by the tinge of yellow in his white coat.

"No, *mon purr*," I said. "Joanna must know the truth. Joanna must know how proud I am to be the son of Edwarde Dauphin."

"Then you will lose her."

"Never! That cannot happen!"

My father walked stiffly to the fireplace, staring into the gray ashes. "Ring for Francois," he said. "Let him build the fire. I am cold, Etienne."

I walked to the cord and pulled it. My father turned to me and said: "You must wait, my son. At dinner this evening, perhaps. Do not speak of me until then."

"Very well, father."

When I left the library, I encountered Joanna at the head of the stairway, and she spoke to me excitedly.

"Oh, Etienne! What a *beautiful* old house. I know I will love it! May we see the rest?"

"Of course," I said.

"You look troubled. Is something wrong?"

"No, no. I was thinking how lovely you are."

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We embraced, and her warm full body against mine confirmed my conviction that we should never be parted. She put her arm in mine, and we strolled through the great rooms of the house. She was ecstatic at their size and elegance, exclaiming over the carpeting, the gnarled furniture, the ancient silver and pewter, the gallery of family paintings. When she came upon an early portrait of my mother, her eyes misted.

"She was lovely," Joanna said. "Like a princess! And what of your father? Is there no portrait of him?"

"No," I said hurriedly. "No portrait." I had spoken my first lie to Joanna, for there was a painting, half-completed, which my mother had begun in the last year of her life. It was a whispering little watercolor, and Joanna discovered it to my consternation.

"What a magnificent cat!" she said. "Was it a pet?"

"It is Dauphin," I said nervously.

She laughed. "He has your eyes, Etienne."

"Joanna, I must tell you something—"

"And this ferocious gentleman with the moustaches? Who is he?"

"My grandfather. Joanna, you must listen—"

Francois, who had been following our inspection tour at shadow's-length, interrupted. I suspected that his timing was no mere coincidence.

"We will be serving dinner at seven-thirty," he said. "If the lady would care to dress—"

"Of course," Joanna said. "Will you excuse me, Etienne?"

I bowed to her, and she was gone.

At fifteen minutes to the appointed dining time, I was ready, and hastened below to talk once more with my father. He was in the dining room, instructing the servants as to the placement of the silver and accessories. My father was proud of the excellence of his table, and took all his meals in the splendid manner. His appreciation of food and wine was unsurpassed in my experience, and it had always been the greatest of pleasures for me to watch him at table, stalking across the damask and dipping delicately into the silver dishes prepared for him. He pretended to be too busy with his dinner preparations to engage me in conversation, but I insisted.

"I must talk to you," I said. "We must decide together how to do this."

"It will not be easy," he answered with a twinkle. "Consider Joanna's view. A cat as large and as old as myself is cause enough for comment. A cat that speaks is alarming. A cat that dines at table with the household is shocking. And a cat whom

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you must introduce as your—"

"Stop it!" I cried. "Joanna must know the truth. You must help me reveal it to her."

"Then you will not heed my advice?"

"In all things but this. Our marriage can never be happy unless she accepts you for what you are."

"And if there is no marriage?"

I would not admit to this possibility. Joanna was mine; nothing could alter that. The look of pain and bewilderment in my eyes must have been evident to my father, for he touched my arm gently with his paw and said:

"I will help you, Etienne. You must give me your trust."

"Always!"

"Then come to dinner with Joanna and explain nothing. Wait for me to appear."

I grasped his paw and raised it to my lips. "Thank you, father!"

He turned to Francois, and snapped: "You have my instructions?"

"Yes, sir," the servant replied.

"Then all is ready. I shall return to my room now, Etienne. You may bring your fiancee to dine."

I hastened up the stairway, and found Joanna ready, strikingly beautiful in shimmering white satin. Together, we descended the grand staircase and entered the room.

Her eyes shone at the magnificence of the service set upon the table, at the soldiery array of fine wines, some of them already poured into their proper glasses for my father's enjoyment: *Haut Medoc*, from *St. Estephe*, authentic *Chablis*, *Epernay Champagne*, and an American import from the Napa Valley of which he was fond. I waited expectantly for his appearance as we sipped our aperitif, while Joanna chatted about innocuous matters, with no idea of the tormented state I was in.

At eight o'clock, my father had not yet made his appearance, and I grew ever more distraught as Francois signalled for the serving of the *bouillon au madere*. Had he changed his mind? Would I be left to explain my status without his help? I hadn't realized until this moment how difficult a task I had alloted for myself, and the fear of losing Joanna was terrible within me. The soup was flat and tasteless on my tongue, and the misery in my manner was too apparent for Joanna to miss.

"What is it, Etienne?" she said. "You've been so morose all day. Can't you tell me what's wrong?"

"No, it's nothing. It's just—" I let the impulse take possession of my speech. "Joanna, there's something I

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should tell you. About my mother, and my father—"

"Ahem," Francois said.

He turned to the doorway, and our glances followed his.

"Oh, Etienne!" Joanna cried, in a voice ringing with delight.

It was my father, the cat, watching us with his gray, gold-flecked eyes. He approached the dining table, regarding Joanna with timidity and caution.

"It's the cat in the painting!" Joanna said. "You didn't tell me he was here, Etienne. He's beautiful!"

"Joanna, this is—"

"Dauphin! I would have known him anywhere. Here, Dauphin! Here, kitty, kitty, kitty!"

Slowly, my father approached her outstretched hand, and allowed her to scratch the thick fur on the back of his neck.

"Aren't you the pretty little pussy! Aren't you the sweetest little thing!"

"Joanna!"

She lifted my father by the haunches, and held him in her lap, stroking his fur and cooing the silly little words that women address to their pets. The sight pained and confused me, and I sought to find an opening word that would allow me to explain, yet hoping all the time that my father would himself provide the answer.

Then my father spoke.

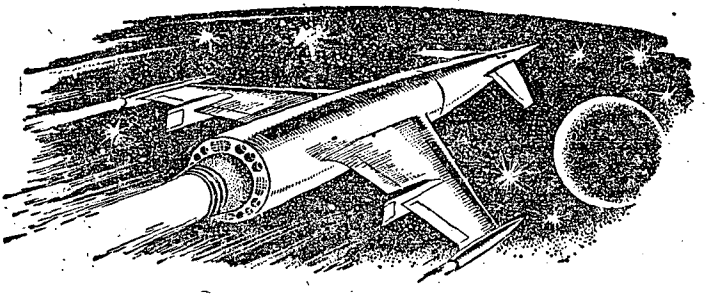
"Meow," he said.

"Are you hungry?" Joanna asked solicitously. "Is the little pussy hungry?"

"Meow," my father said, and I believed my heart broke then and there. He leaped from her lap and padded across the room. I watched him through blurred eyes as he followed Francois to the corner, where the servant had placed a shallow bowl of milk. He lapped at it eagerly, until the last white drop was gone. Then he yawned and stretched, and trotted back to the doorway, with one fleeting glance in my direction that spoke articulately of what I must do next.

"What a wonderful animal," Joanna said.

"Yes," I answered. "He was my mother's favorite."



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requiem for a scientist

by C. M. KORNBLUTH

When is a scientist not a scientist? A leading SF writer analyzes the work of a prominent Ufologist.

I DO NOT know Ivan T. Sanderson, but our mutual friend who edits this magazine tells me that Sanderson likes my writing. Well, I used to like his writing very much indeed, and I wish I still did.

The first thing by Sanderson I read was ANIMAL TREASURE, a big sumptuous book about a zoological expedition to Africa which he headed. It is a book in the great English tradition of popularized science writing, and I ask leave to expound on those last three synergic words.

Firstly, *popularized:* ANIMAL TREASURE is free from specialist lingo and makes its myriad points in plain language. The famous chapter on Bats, for instance, could surely be read by a child of twelve with pleasure and profit, and without bewilderment.

Secondly, *science:* The book is about a new and creative effort to push back the borders of the unknown. Sanderson realized that the taxonomic phase of zoology had practically ended and that the study of the living animal in its habitat was just beginning; as a scientist must, he left the old behind and explored

Still in his mid-thirties, Cyril Kornbluth, called S. F's "angry man" wields (to quote Judith Merril) "the scalpel of social satire with a savagely entertaining skill." Author of several hundred magazine pieces, and some novels, he here discusses the writings of Ivan T. Sanderson.

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the new. He made at least one major discovery: that the velocity, so to speak, of animal behavior varies according to barometric pressure. He applied this discovery; by matching his own velocity to that of the animal community he was able to move through it and observe, undisturbing and undisturbed.

Thirdly, *writing:* Sanderson is an educated Englishman and so has the literary advantage of us colonials, despite our occasional crude vigor; moreover he has a large poetic talent. One of the most magical evocations I know is his description of forest rats feeding and at play. Eden is not wholly lost when such a stylist can recall primeval innocence for a page or two.

There is no hint of what L. Sprague de Camp calls "credophilia" in ANIMAL TREASURE. I think an attack by Martin Gardner on an allusion to gorillas therein as retrogressed human beings unfairly distorted a moving moment of fancy. There is not much "adventure" in the book; the popularization, the science, and the writing somehow don't leave much room for "adventure." And there is one stupefying incident reported which, for all I know, knocked down Sanderson's scientific skepticism once and for all. Some of Sanderson's native help went fishing in a freshwater African river and hauled out—an enormous sting ray! A creature whose existence in inland waters was utterly unsuspected by science! It must have been a shattering experience; how shattering, only Sanderson could say.

The next book by Sanderson which I read was about zoological exploration in the rainforest of South America. The prose was as good as ever. The scientific content was nil. "Adventure" and "human interest" were rampant. Perhaps a publisher told Sanderson: "People are interested in what things cost; put in all the prices." That is the kind of thing publishers are always telling writers, and that is one of the 700 reasons why mediocre books get written. The South America book was mediocre.

My subsequent acquaintance with Sanderson's work has been through the newspapers, television and this magazine. He has a zoo—in New Jersey? —which was hit by the summer floods of 1955. (As one victim to another, the hand of sympathy: they caved in my place's basement retaining wall.) He appears on television with his "animal friends" and renders value received; there is an entertaining tension in the idea of an uninhibited animal and a proper English gentleman unbilically twinned by a leash. He wrote a book on the history of whaling which I shall not read be-

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cause it derides the New England whaleboat.* He writes articles which describe the African lion and articles which speculate on (after the African sting ray, why not?) the African brontosaurus.

In none of this is there any trace of the scientist Sanderson once was. A scientist's franchise does not lapse through disuse; Newton's genius slept for decades and then awoke unimpaired for one final effort that awed the mathematicians of Europe. But this is not to say, as our editor does, that Sanderson is, in 1957, a "noted scientist"—let alone "the noted scientist." I think Sanderson's career for some time has been that of a writer and entertainer. I am afraid that his article *UFO—Friend or Foe* in the August 1957 issue of this magazine abounds with inductive proof that Sanderson has left the way of science far behind him.

The article begins with a most unscientific invocation of authority: "the official pronouncement" of a rear admiral connected with a "*National* Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena" [italics mine. CMK]. The "pronouncement", reprinted on p. 12, makes it plain that the NICAP is a private organization which had nothing "official" about it in any governmental sense. The membership of retired admirals and generals in the organization is no guarantee of soundness either, but probably the reverse. As a class, retired military officers are old men in an unfamiliar environment, men accustomed to a kind of two-way loyalty rare in civilian life. A man conditioned to believe what he is told by thirty years of "the briefing process' must be remarkably easy to hoax.

The article then says "the science of Ufology has been established. Now it has to be accepted. This statement would have delighted some medieval schoolmen, but I am afraid it is eight centuries out of date. The Nominalism-Realism controversy is over, and Nominalism won—as Sanderson demonstrates three paragraphs later with the sound Nominalist statement: "A good example of this fallacy is the notion that there is an animal called 'The Whale'. Actually there are more than 150 entirely different kinds of whales..." An even better example of the Realist fallacy is the notion that there is a science called "Ufology". Actually there are an indefinite number of anecdotes ranging from the plausible to the incredible, several hypotheses about the anecdotes, and an absence of tangible evidence.

The article then lists four of these hypotheses and discusses the first ("unexplained natural phenomena...not alive") mostly by scientist-

*It does *not*: it praises them to the skies!!! (I. S.)

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baiting in the manner of Charles Fort, though without his good humor. Terms like "established, entrenched, or orthodox Science"; "Science—the Holy Cow": "poor benighted...scientist"; "'expert'" used ironically; a scientist's "pure desperation"; "puerile"; "fantastic"; and an ambiguous "hot air" are not what we would expect to hear from "the noted scientist" of the blurb.

The next hypothesis discussed is that some at least of the anecdotes are about living creatures hitherto unknown whose habitat is the upper air or outer space. Sanderson professes surprise that the lady resident in Austria who originated the hypothesis is "well known in...astrological circles." I can only say that I am surprised at his surprise, and would wager that she is also well known in anthroposophical circle, antivivisectionist circles, spiritualistic circles, and, if fluoridation has spread to Austria, in antifluoridation circles. Sanderson's "surprise" seems to me equivalent to willful ignorance of the fact that many UFO fans are devoutly anti-scientific people.

The hypothesis itself is a charming piece of floss-candy. If it is correct, a UFO trap baited with energy can be easily built and eventually one of the tenuous creatures will be found thrashing about in it, changing desperately from sphere to spindle to hexagon to lens. But Sanderson does not envision anything as scientifically operative as an experiment to test a hypothesis. He says the "Wassilko-Serecki theory is worthy of the profoundest conideration." Think about it; believe in it. But *do* anything? No; that's clean off the coordinates of "Ufology."

The third hypothesis of the article is that some of the anecdotes are about alien space ships. Sanderson says he will discuss it in a later article, pausing only to remark that "armed with the appropriate findings of modern science, nobody in their right mind should" doubt that somewhere out there is intelligent life. It may be so, but how did "established, entrenched, or orthodox Science...the Holy Cow" adored by "poor benighted, overworked and usually underpaid votaries suddenly become capable of accurate prediction when five pages back it couldn't see its hand in front of its face? Perhaps there is some distinction here which I miss; perhaps there is Good Science and there is Bad Science, and Sanderson can tell one from the other. I admit that I cannot.

The last of the hypotheses discussed in the article is chiefly that some of the anecdotes are really about Russians who land disk-shaped, German-designed aircraft in rural parts of the United

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States, pretend to naive hayseeds that they are space-travelers, and try to indoctrinate them with the Communist "peace line."

Of this hypothesis we might say that it unnecessarily multiplies elements, but this would be to apply the scientific test called "Occam's Razor" and Sanderson might not approve. William of Occam was the great champion of the Nominalists, and we have seen where Sanderson appears to stand on that question.

Aside from Sanderson, I feel that my article would be incomplete without a brief but warm personal attack on the editor of this magazine. Hans Stefan Santesson is a wily professional who knows all the tricks by which a magazine can be made to appear impartial in a controversy while it actually favors one side. He has intimated to me that the method he will use is to give Sanderson the last word in a counter-article or perhaps let him do a running commentary on this one. Either way should be effective; I can be taken up on quibbles and distinctions that are not differences until the impression is created that an avalanche of facts has buried me from sight. May the reader merely know that I am not miffed at Sanderson for holding his views or expresing them; if he has a faith, he has a duty to spread it. But I do object to its being done in the name of science, and to a mahdi being described, in what is presumed to be an objective editorial note, as a scientist.

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON AERIAL PHENOMENA

Important additions have just been announced to the NICAP Board of Governors and panel of Special Advisers, new Board members including Vice Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, U. S. N. (Ret.), former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency; Rear Admiral Herbert B. Knowles, U. S. N. (Ret.), submarine expert; and Major Dewey Fournet, Jr., U. S. Air Force Reserve, former liaison Intelligence officer on the Air Force UFO Project Blue Book. *Advisers include Wilbert B. Smith, the Canadian Government official who was in charge of Project Magnet, the semi-official Canadian UFO investigation; Albert M. Chop, the Air Force press official designated to handle all flying saucer information at the Pentagon during* 1951-53*; and Kenneth Steinmetz, past President, Denver Astronomical Society, and now in charge of the Denver* Project Moonwatch *unit for satellite tracking.*

Associate Membership in NICAP, which is headed by Major Donald E Keyhoe, U. S. M. C. (Ret.), is $7.50, *this entitling you to receive* The UFO Investigator *for a year and special bulletins. Inquiries should be addressed directly to Major Keyhoe at National Investigations Committee,* [redacted] *Connecticut Ave., N. W., Washington* 6, *D. C.*

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comments from a scientist

by IVAN T. SANDERSON

What is a scientist—and what isn't! A defence of the scientific approach—and what this really means.

THE PREVIOUS observations have, as promised to their author, been shown to me by our Editor and I herewith offer my comments. Probably I would have done better to have adopted my usual practice; to wit, take a clean sheet of letter-head, address it to the latter, type in the middle of it "Oh dear!", sign, seal, and post. However, Mr. Kornbluth has not only done me the honor of tabling me, but has made so many valid points and brought up so many others that are—at least to me—of so much interest, that I welcome this opportunity to make reply to him. But first, let me endeavor to get one point cleared up—about our editor.

This personage, in this case, certainly *does* favour one side but it is certainly not mine. Would anybody as editorially "wily" as Hans Stefan Santesson—despite our obvious eponymous ancestry—favor a mere assembler of useless information such as I, above one such as Mr. Kornbluth whose work is invariably amusing, often brilliant, and is thus always a topnotch circulation-

When Cyril first said something about his wish to comment on Ivan Sanderson's fall from scientific grace in taking an interest in Ufology, we said "fine"—and would he mind our showing it to Ivan who might want to make some comments. And here is Sanderson's "Note to C.M.K."

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builder? No indeed! My amiable adversary leads off; I can only hope to be permitted to follow with the last word.

I do not know C. M. Kornbluth—that, I suppose, is obvious from his opening remark—but I do like his yarns very much indeed. I think I will like him too, when we meet. In the meantime, I am genuinely appreciative of his criticisms for it will be a sad day when everybody agrees about everything and a signal for self-emolition when the time comes that anybody agrees with me about anything! Nonetheless, while I feel he is very right about some things, he seems to be a bit muddled about others, and quite dotty on some. His idea that I do a "running commentary" is probably best.

First then, about *popularized science writing*. I don't think I like this term and I am not sure that it expresses what its writer intends. I presume "science-writing" is a compound noun and that "popularized" is a sort of bastard adjective; whereby, we get a specialized form of writing known only to or principally to "science," that has already been made popular—a sort of Einsteinian formula that is already known to most people, like MV|e2. My first book, *Animal Treasure* had no scientific content as its preface clearly stated and as any **zoologist** will affirm. It wasn't "popularized"; it was straight narrative, though it did become rather popular and not only thru a Book-of-the-Month Club choice. It is still in print in several languages. My second effort, *Caribbean Treasure*, which sold nearly as well in its own right, happened to have several purely scientific passages in its text. It contained no adventures except a rather dreary boating incident and I never mentioned the cost of anything therein. My third opus in that series, *Living Treasure*, had whole chapters on purely scientific matters, and sold fairly well. I mentioned a couple of "adventures" and some prices. Thus, I fear me, Mr. Kornbluth has got this first part all backwards and I must explain why so.

It is not properly realized in this country, the United States of *North* America—as opposed to those of Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina—that what we here call "science" is regarded by the rest of the world as mere "technology"; that what they all call "science" we elevate to "philosophy"; and that everybody else considers that which we term metaphysics, as simple philosophy. Mr. Kornbluth obviously labours under these (as he calls them) "colonial" delusions, rightly or wrongly, for they are in part only matters of semantic

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topology. To be precise, he doesn't know what *science* is —as opposed to bottle-washing and button-pushing—and he seems to have no idea at all what constitutes a scientist. He is not alone. This is a national failing and a very dangerous one. Our editor is to be praised for allowing space to, for once, bring this out in the open for a good airing.

There is an extraordinary and widespread if not universal belief in this great country that building radio sets, counting field-mouse droppings, repairing an airplane, and so forth constitutes "science"—see numerous leading weekly and monthly publications. Conversely, and for some even more extraordinary reason, a person to be dubbed a "scientist" has, it is confidently believed, to work for pay for a certain kind of organization. All who do not do so, whatever their training and accomplishments may be are referred to and looked upon as "amateurs." To define the above specified type of organization is, however, impossible: even the smallest pharmaceutical companies may be eligible but the largest shoe-factory for instance, is not; most educational establishments are, but for some insane reasons Normal Schools are excluded; and so on and so forth.

You can "make" a technician, and sometimes even out of a moron, by some vocational training. You can "stop" him being one by firing him from his job. You can't "make" a scientist; and to try to do so, you have to give him years of training in true scientific (not technological, mark you) methodology. If your effort succeeds, he or she starts to think in a truly scientific manner, and if he or she then engages in original research with any cogent results, you have a "scientist" and a person who can not then ever "stop" being one. Despite the fact that I now make my living as an impressario by writing, yakking in various media, including on television (with the leather umbilical cord and all), and importing animals, I was trained as a scientist, have degrees, from a rather high-standing university, in Zoology, Geology and Botany, have never stopped original research in phytozoogeography, and so can never "*stop*" being a scientist. My attitude and approach to Ufology is, thus, not that of a technologist or an "Expert." Science is defined by the better dictionaries as "The pursuit of the Unknown."

As to Mr. Kornbluth's specific analysis of my article in the August issue of FU, I have things to say that may as well also be assembled in the running commentary form.

The opening statement in this was neither scientific nor

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unscientific. Admiral Delmar S. Farnhey though retired from his Service happens still to be employed by the Government on rocketry and is one of our few really leading experts in such matters. His pronouncement was therefore "official." If he was conditioned by the "briefing process", the Navy must have more facts on UFOs than ever the Air Force.

Ufology *is* established, and as a science to boot if anybody takes the trouble to be scientific about it—not just technical. The very fact that Ufos are probably of an enormous variety adds materially to this concept. The matter of testing their very existence is a nice point but who is going to provide the money to "test" one, as a geophysicist does earthquakes by letting off little bombs—even? We'll get around to doing something of that nature when the "experts stop yakking, just like many people did about evolution when they had climbed down from Darwin's shoulders.

The possibility that some Ufos might be intelligently-piloted intraspace craft has been fully explored in a piece that appeared in the last issue of FU. Meantime, let me say that if only the poor public, the professional sceptics, the "experts," and the technologists would only read the published works of scientists they would readily see the possibilities of the suggestion, and at the same time learn what is *good* science and what is *bad* —the latter being the maunderings of the bottle-washers and button-pushers whose little minds, like those of the nominalists, are so closely tied to the limited surface of this earth and to their textbooks.

As to the Russkies in Ufology, there was a time when I thought the idea was all wet. Now, bearing in mind several years in a very agile intelligence service, I am not at all so sure. While General Doolittle (ret) says the Germans never flew a lenticular, supersonic plane, and the Russians may not have one, the pontifications of those people who say they talked with "people" from space is remarkably like the earlier advices of Messrs. Marx, Engels, Lenin, and even that knave, Bernard Shaw. The best destructive propaganda is constructive jitters.

And so we are left with the theorizing of the Grafin Zoe Wassilko-Serecki. I must say I am very surprised that Mr. Kornbluth is surprised that I am surprised that such a theory should have come from an astrologer. As a scientist, I considered it positively thundering but then I did not then and Mr. Kornbluth obviously does not know the Countess Wassilko-Serecki. The theory itself does make more sense

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than anything else I have yet heard, and I am not referring to Dr. Menzel and his hot air. It makes so much sense, it *could* explain almost everything that has been puzzling everybody, including the Air Force, but it is naturally incomprehensible to the technicians who firmly believe that "*Life*" must be founded on hydrocarbons, breathe only oxygen, live *on* a planet between 0° and 100° centigrade, and eat matter. The really funny thing is that a bunch of technicians spent a lot of one of our largest radiocommunication corporation's money two years ago only to prove that the other planets did affect the ryhthm of life on this one.

The really dotty item in Mr. Kornbluth's notes, however, is his preposterous idea that I ever said—and in the *Saturday Evening Post*, yet!—that there are Brontosauruses living in Africa! Oh dear! why can't writers read; and why must everybody think that all "dinosaurs"—and there are actually no such things, the word meaning merely "terrible reptile," being purely a popular term, and usually applied to members of only three orders of allegedly totally extinct reptiles—are at least eighty feet long and therefore always Brontosaurs. The average size of the members of the three groups of reptiles referred to was about that of a large dog and all I said was there *could* be a few such animals left in parts of Africa just as there is one of an even more ancient order left about New Zealand—the Tuatara. The trouble, I suppose, is lack of proper scientific education.

GOOD-BY, TERRA

A Martian explorer called Klimp,
Found Earth, but it left him quite limp.
Tho' man merely bored him,
The weather here floored him —
So he hurried back home in his blimp.

Zelda Kessler

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inside stuff

by THEODORE PRATT

Love is rather fragile as he discovered. If this was love, he wanted to suffer something worse than pain.

THE place where Young Gastric Juice and Old Gastric Juice worked was very pleasant, clean, bright, and cheery. The walls were of a delightful shade of yellow, smooth and round on all sides, enclosing an interior shaped something like an elongated pear. Near its top at one end was an opening that led to the upper outside regions, while down near the bottom at the other end was a second opening leading to the lower regions.

The place was regularly occupied only by the two gastric juices, who lay on the floor while they rested between their labors. Young Gastric Juice now sat up, yawning and stretching. In one hand, held far out, he had an object that looked a good deal like a perfume atomizer. Getting to his feet, he advised his still sleeping companion, "Come on, old man, get up; it's time for work."

Old Gastric Juice sat up, his eyes still closed. He grunted, "Is that you, my boy?"

Young Gastric Juice replied a little impatiently, "Yes, yes, and you ought to be

Who is to say what is and is not Fantasy, and that it is impossible that things like this could happen? Theodore Pratt returns with this unusual story, adapted by the author from the one act-play of the same name, published in PLAYS FOR STROLLING MUMMERS (1926, *Appleton*).

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up." He squeezed the bulb of his atomizer, sending a fine spray into the air, from which there came the odor of pepsin.

With his eyes still closed, Old Gastric Juice asked, "What are you doing?"

"Getting the air ready. It's nearly dinner time. Come on, hurry up; you've got to help."

Old Gastric Juice, with an effort, got his eyes opened. He lumbered to his feet. "Dinner time again. What a life!" With his own atomizer he began to spray the air.

"Well," said Young Gastric Juice, "you don't think I like it any better than you do, do you? Slaving down here in this hole, three meals a day, year in and year out!"

"Oh, I don't kick about the work," replied Old Gastric Juice. "I've been at it too long. We were made for it and we've got to do it. If you're a gastric juice, you're a gastric juice, that's all, the same as if a person's a man, he's a man." Contemptuously, he pointed upward. "Like this one."

"You're always k i c k i n g about him and his stomach. What's the m a t t e r with them?"

Old Gastric Juice stopped s p r a y i n g for a moment. "What's the matter with them? This frail, puny thing —ah, my boy, you are very young—"

"Yes, yes I know!"

"If you could have lived in the time I have lived in, and worked in the stomachs I have worked in!"

Indulgently, Young Gastric Juice asked, "Were they much better than this one?"

"Much better? My boy, there is no comparison. Why, I once worked in the stomach of Mark Antony! There was a stomach for you! What a beautiful spot it was! And what times we used to have there! That is, when he was home. For when Mark Antony was in Rome he did as the Romans did, but when he was in Egypt he did what the Egyptians did."

"I've heard about his Egyptian trip. Wasn't there a woman mixed up in it?"

"My boy, there is a woman mixed up in everything. The only thing I didn't like about Cleopatra was the stuff she used to feed Mark Antony. It kept us working day and night, and then we didn't know what to do with most of it. Peacocks' brains, crocodiles' liver, hornets' feet, plovers' breasts, and the throats of buzzards! They were almost as bad as the things this man sends down."

"Why did Cleopatra have those strange things to eat?"

"Because she was beautiful."

"Must a person eat such things to be beautiful? Why, the first job I ever had was with a beautiful girl, and she didn't have things like that. In fact, she was trying to get

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a part as an actress and some days she didn't have anything to eat at all."

"Peacocks' brains," Old Gastric Juice lectured, "were not strange in the days of Cleopatra. Foods change, my boy, through the ages, like government, or religion, or clothes. There is only one thing that never changes. That's love."

Wonderingly, Young Gastric Juice asked, "Love—?"

"Haven't you ever been in love?"

"No—I can't say that I have."

"You have never loved anybody?"

"No."

"What a happy soul is here!"

"Why do you say that?"

"Because, my boy, love is a terrible thing."

"What happens when you are in love?"

"Everything. Nothing. A lot of things you never expected could happen."

"It must be very interesting."

"Sometimes it is. I once was in love with a chicken-wing, a pretty little thing. She had the bluest eyes and the whitest skin. I was young then, like you, and I adored her—until she ran away with a piece of turkey on Thanksgiving Day. Then there was the Irish potato I fell in love with. We promised eternal devotion and an hour later she eloped with a fried egg. Women are fickle things, my boy. Take my advice and never fall in love."

"Still," said Young Gastric Juice with anticipation, "I should like to know how it feels. Tell me more about your love affairs."

"Let's talk of something pleasant." He glanced upward. "Such as what he's going to send down to us tonight. At least I hope it's pleasant."

"I sure hope he hasn't gone to the Presto Lunch again."

From above there came first a gulping sound and then a sliding noise. Old Gastric warned, "Here comes something."

They turned, to look at the upper opening. Through it a fat stumpy creature slid down, dropped, landed in a heap on the floor, and regarded them from small, odd-shaped eyes.

"A baked potato," observed Old Gastric Juice. "He must have been invited out to dinner."

In a cracked, old woman's voice, Potato cried, "What's happened to me? Where am I?"

Old Gastric Juice went to her and sprayed her with his atomizer. "You have arrived in the stomach, madam, where the gastric juices will entertain you."

As Young Gastric Juice raised his atomizer and sent a spray of strong pepsin over

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her, she backed away and protested, "Don't do that!"

Young Gastric Juice stood her in a corner and said, "That's all for right now. We'll let you soak a bit."

Potato stood moaning and groaning and looking about in all directions with her queer eyes. Young Gastric Juice turned from her just as a newcomer came down the chute. This one was a white, fragile-looking creature, slim and dainty, with a crisp pink headdress. She landed lithely on her feet and stood staring about in fright.

"A nice little piece of celery," said Old Gastric Juice, giving her a squirt from his atomizer.

Celery shrank back, crying, "Oh, you hurt me! You hurt me! Why did you do that?"

Celery backed away as Young Gastric Juice came forward, raising his atomizer. As he did so their glances met. Their eyes held each other for a few silent seconds and then Young Gastric Juice lowered his atomizer, s t u t t e r i n g. "Why—why . . ."

Celery, staring at him, pleaded, "You won't hurt me, will you? Say you won't hurt me."

Slowly, staring at her, Young Gastric Juice, murmured, "I won't hurt you."

"I like you," Celery told him warmly.

"I wouldn't hurt you for the world," said Young Gastric Juice.

"I'm sure I like you!" cried Celery. "And you—do you like me?"

Young Gastric Juice, in a low voice began to reply, "I—"

Old Gastric Juice, who had been watching and listening to their exchange, interrupted, "Be careful, my boy! You're walking on dangerous ground. Here—I'll spray her a little more and—"

Young Gastric Juice, as Celery gave a frightened cry, sprang before her, warning, "Don't touch her!"

"My boy! My boy!" exclaimed Old Gastric Juice. "Do you know what is happening to you?"

"It doesn't matter," Young Gastric Juice declared. "I don't want you to touch her."

"And why not?" asked Old Gastric Juice. "Tell me, why not?"

"Because—" Young Gastric Juice looked for a long moment at Celery. "Because I love her."

Old Gastric Juice burst into laughter. He turned to Potato, who tried to evade him by waddling away, but he caught her with a thick spray. She moaned and groaned and seemed to soften. Old Gastric Juice turned back to Young Gastric Juice and Celery, who stood closely embraced and looking into each other's eyes. He advised, "She doesn't

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love you, my boy. She only pretends to so we won't spray her."

Without taking his eyes from Celery, Young Gastric Juice asked her, "You—?"

She declared, "I love you!"

"You are very beautiful," he told her.

"Your eyes are flames that burn a warmth into me."

"You are like a white rose petal."

"The moment I saw you my fibers trembled with joy."

They kissed, lingeringly.

"Hah!" cried Old Gastric Juice.

The young lovers paid no attention to this nor to a loud sliding noise that now came down and landed with a loud thump, then stood staring about and demanding, "What the hell is this?"

Old Gastric Juice assured him, "Merely a place for steaks like you to come for awhile." He sprayed Steak, but no effect was noticeable.

Steak asked, "What's the idea?"

"I am preparing you."

"Yeah?" asked Steak. "You can't hurt me." He roared, "I'm tough!"

"Most of you are," Old Gastric Juice replied, "especially those of you this man eats." He sprayed Steak again. "Did you feel that?"

"The prick of a pin!"

Old Gastric Juice turned to his colleague, who still stood looking deeply into Celery's eyes. "My boy, we've received another shipment. Stop your love-making; I need your help."

Young Gastric Juice assured Celery, "I must leave you for a moment." Their gaze lingered even as he left her and went with Old Gastric Juice to give Steak a heavy atomizing.

"Yah!" Steak yelled. "You can't hurt me! I'm tough!"

"We'll see," said Old Gastric Juice, "we'll see." He looked at Potato. "I think she is ready."

Together they both went to Potato, who tried to elude them but did not succeed. They sprayed her thoroughly and then shoved her into the opening at the lower end of the stomach, into which she disappeared with a loud cry.

Steak, who watched this, demanded, "Do you think you're going to put *me* in there?"

Old Gastric Juice said, "S h o r t l y, s h o r t l y." He sprayed him.

"Sa-ay," S t e a k protested, "that stung. Lay off that!"

Young Gastric Juice had returned to Celery, to tell her softly, "I wondered what love was like, and now I know."

"It is the same with me," Celery murmured.

"I have work to do," Young Gastric Juice told her, "but when I am through I will return to you."

Just then a thin, flat, white

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creature, square in shape, came down from above to stand and asked in bewildered fashion, "What—what happened?"

"Some more of that factory bread," observed Old Gastric Juice, going to her. "Not fit to eat." He sprayed her.

"Oh!" exclaimed Bread in pain.

Young Gastric Juice gave her a squirt and she cried, "What are you doing to me?"

Steak started, manfully, to her rescue, warning, "Leave her alone!" Old Gastric Juice gave him such a thorough spraying that it clouded the air for an instant. Steak backed away, yelling, "Hey!"

Both gastric juices now worked on Bread, soaking her. Her cries became weak as she wilted. "She's ready," said Old Gastric Juice. Together they took her to the lower opening and thrust her in. She disappeared without sound.

Two newcomers now slid down together, one tall, skinny and disagreeable, and the other short, squat and disagreeable.

"There's Cucumber and Milk again," Old Gastric Juice said wearily.

"I suppose," said Young Gastric Juice, "they'll fight as usual."

They fought. They landed in a tangled heap and now Milk ordered, "Get off my leg!"

Cucumber cried, "Stop kicking my ribs!"

"I wasn't kicking your skinny ribs!"

"I was sitting on your fat leg!"

"My leg isn't fat!"

"My ribs aren't skinny!"

"They are!"

"They aren't!"

Old Gastric Juice went to them and sprayed them plentifully. "Stop that noise! Stop it, do you hear?"

Milk turned to him and protested, "Don't do that!"

"Ouch!" cried Cucumber.

Young Gastric Juice sprayed them and Milk informed Cucumber, as though he should do something about it, "He hurt me."

"Well, he hurt me, too," said Cucumber.

"I hate you!" Milk informed him.

"I hate you, too!"

Old Gastric Juice announced, "We can't have any more of that." Together with Young Gastric Juice he sprayed the couple and edged them toward the lower opening where, still being sprayed and arguing as loudly as before, they were thrust in.

At that Steak came forward again to tell them, "You'll never put me in there—I'm tough!"

Young Gastric Juice attempted to spray him, Steak dodged out of the way but was caught in a full spray from Old Gastric Juice. Steak

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ran to one side, yelling, "That stuff stings, like pepper! But I tell you I'm tough!"

Old Gastric Juice proposed, "Let's be done with this tough gentleman." He sprayed him again, and together they backed him toward the lower opening where they went to work on him in earnest.

"I tell you I'm tough!" Steak roared. "Ouch! I'm—ow!" He tottered. Rather weakly he claimed, "I'm tough—I'm..."

Still spraying, the two gastric juices thrust Steak into the lower entrance. As he disappeared he called back, "I'll raise hell in here!"

"I have no doubt of it," Old Gastric Juice said. Then, in a low voice so that Celery would not hear, he suggested, "Let us take care of her now."

Young Gastric Juice replied, "No!"

"It will be better," Old Gastric Juice advised.

"But I love her!"

"She doesn't love you."

"Don't you think I can tell from looking into her eyes?"

"No."

"From kissing her?"

"No."

"How do you know such things?"

Old Gastric Juice explained, "I know that she is not your kind. I, too, as I told you, have loved some of the things that have been sent down in the places where I worked, beautiful bits of food from the outside world. But they are not our kind, and we can love only our kind, as she can love only hers. Anything else is false."

"Well," declared Young Gastric Juice, "we are different. We—". He turned to look at Celery, and stopped.

While they spoke, and unheard by them, a newcomer had arrived. He was round and beautifully cream-colored. He stood very close to Celery and they looked into each other's eyes just the way she and Young Gastric Juice had done.

"Bonbon," said Old Gastric Juice.

Bonbon assured Celery, "You are very beautiful."

Celery replied, "Your eyes are flames that burn a warmth into me."

"You are like a white rose petal."

"The moment I saw you my fibers trembled with joy."

Young Gastric Juice sprang forward, crying, "Wait!"

Celery and Bonbon clung to each other while they regarded him. Of Celery Young Gastric Juice demanded, "You don't love me any more?"

"I think you are very nice."

"You love him?"

This time Celery did not reply but turned to Bonbon and gazed into his eyes.

In an anguished voice Young Gastric Juice told Celery, "Do you know that if it is he you love, and not me,

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you cannot stay here any longer?"

In a whisper Celery, still staring at Bonbon, replied, "Yes."

"That you will have to go —in there?" Young Gastric Juice indicated the lower opening.

"Yes."

"Then you would rather go there with him than stay with me and live?"

Celery nodded.

Young Gastric Juice gave an agonized cry. "If this is love, then give me something worse than pain!"

Celery and Bonbon, hand in hand, went to Old Gastric Juice and stood before him. She said, "We are ready."

Old Gastric Juice gave them a good spraying.

Together they went to the lower opening and, without hesitating, still hand in hand, entered and disappeared.

To Young Gastric Juice, who stood watching this morosely, Old Gastric Juice said, "My boy, I am age and you are youth. I gave you advice, but like youth, you refused to take it. You have to find experience for yourself."

"I hate her!"

"I once said the same."

"I love her!"

"Well, the only thing we can decide is that we're through work for the day. Nothing to do until breakfast. I only hope he doesn't have his usual eggs again."

"It doesn't matter. Nothing matters!"

From where he lay, getting ready to sleep again, Old Gastric Juice said, "Another day gone."

"I'll never fall in love again, old man."

"I've been sixty years here now," ruminated Old Gastric Juice. "He can't last much longer..."

Young Gastric Juice said, "I was a fool to tell her all those things."

"The last fellow I worked in only lived twenty-eight years. You don't always have that luck."

Young Gastric Juice sank to the floor and lay at length, saying, "Old man!"

Old Gastric Juice asked, "What is it?"

"As long as I live," Young Gastric Juice announced with firm resolve, "I'll never fall in love again. I'll hate women to my dying day. Do you hear? I'll hate them, and I'll never fall in love again!"

"That's good."

"Never! Never!" There was a silence. Both seemed to doze, but in a moment Young Gastric Juice raised himself on one elbow and said again, "Old man."

Sleepily, Old Gastric Juice replied, "Uh?"

"Maybe," said Young Gastric Juice, "there'll be some more celery tomorrow night."

"Uh..."

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shapes in the sky

by CIVILIAN SAUCER INTELLIGENCE

More sounds in the sky—sonic booms and skyquakes, sometimes attributed to jets—sometimes saucers.

"WINDOW - SMASHING BLAST ROCKS L.A.!" shouted the headlines of the Los Angeles *Herald-Express* on May 22, 1957. "Frantic callers last night jammed telephone switchboards at City Hall and police stations. A police 'disaster believed present' alert was issued and then cancelled...off-duty officers stood by...sidewalks were cracked... Several Hollywood Hills citizens reported that they were cut by shattered glass... The blast was attributed to a jet plane crashing the sound barrier." But the next day's Los Angeles *Times* reported that this attribution had had to be withdrawn. It editorialized: "The roll has been called of all probable sources of the mystery blast—called for convenience 'sonic'—which hit the city and many suburbs Tuesday night. There were no jet planes up, it is said, no rocket engines let go, no one mislaid any dynamite, and so on... Maybe we will have to attribute the noise to gremlins in a flying saucer."

The incident is typical of hundreds that have taken place in the last few years.

The Research Section of Civilian Saucer Intelligence continues to discuss acoustic phenomena, "sounds in the sky," in their monthly column on UFO sightings and reports, written specially for this magazine. CSI publishes a newsletter and has an extensive file of material on Ufology.

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These aerial disturbances called "skyquakes" seem to happen everywhere; but some places are particularly favored—or cursed. Los Angeles is one of them. The May 21st detonation was only one of a series that began March 5th, 1957. The *Herald-Express* of that date gave it two-inch scarlet scareheads: "JET BLAST RIPS L.A.! Homes Damaged By Worst Sonic Shock." CSI member Idabel Epperson told us: "It felt like a huge truck hitting the house—by far the worst we've ever felt. We have had 'sonic blasts' in the past, but they have *never* covered such a wide area." (The March 5th shock was felt over a circle at least 30 miles in diameter.) There was no explanation. "Investigation of all aircraft manufacturers and military air bases within a 100-mile radius of L. A. was made, without success," reported regional CAA administrator W. P. Plett three weeks later *(Mirror-News, Mar. 26)*.

On the evening of May 19th, the area affected was bigger than ever—from Santa Susana in the northwest to Baldwin Park, fifty miles southeast. "Many fled from their homes, thinking that an earthquake had struck." This time, for a change, the shock was not blamed on jet planes, but on rocket-engine testing at Chatsworth (a mere forty miles from Baldwin Park!) True, replied the Rocketdyne Corp., it was testing engines; but it does this all day long without causing any alarm; the tests that evening were "normal in every respect." The Weather Bureau speculated that "a heavy and very high cloud deck may have acted as a reflecting medium, to step up the noise" but had to add that "locally it was clear. Visibility was excellent." The hypothetical "cloud deck," for which there was no evidence, went into the headlines, as if a fact: "ROCKET BLAST BOUNCES OFF CLOUD, JOLTS L.A." *(Herald-Express,* May 20.)

Two days later came the big May 21st shock. Again, on the morning of the 24th, "hundreds of frightened people ran into the streets," according to the *Herald-Express;* and the irate City Council "Acts To End Sonic Blast Terror"—by demanding an explanation from their local Civil Defense Director, Col. Richard F. Lynch. However, Lynch was unable to furnish any (L.A. *Times,* May 28). "Aside from the physical damage, these sonic blasts could have brought about panic-provoked incidents of serious proportions," fumed Councilman Harold Henry. Not knowing what else to do, the City Council called for a Congressional investigation.

As we see by all this, it i

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usually taken for granted nowadays that any unexplained concussion is a "sonic boom" caused by jet aircraft. At first, some other cause may be assumed—local boiler or gas explosions, blasting, earthquakes—but these are easily eliminated by a little checking. The finger of suspicion then customarily points at the jet fighter plane. There are exceptions: "A thundering boom that knocked at least one Florence resident out of bed Friday night was still a mystery... it might have been caused by a floating mine exploding on the beach." (Portland *Oregonian*, Feb. 17, 1957.) And back in the days when there was nothing in the skies to pin the blame on, "subterranean noises" used to be a favored explanation: it was explained then that the sound only *seemed* to come from the sky.

Some sonic booms are caused by jet aircraft. When a jet plane pulls out of a supersonic dive, the shock wave that piled up in front of it continues on at the speed of sound in the direction of the dive, and strikes the ground with explosive force a few seconds later. The crucial question is: how big are the effects of a plane-caused sonic boom? According to a recent article that Senator Barry Goldwater (R., Ariz.) wrote for the Aircraft Industries Association of America, they are small and localized. They *can* break windows. But, unless the plane dives to a very low altitude, they cannot crack pavement; they cannot crack plaster walls "installed according to most building codes"; they cannot shake the ground; they cannot "structurally damage even the flimsiest shack." And they are felt over only a rather small area. Goldwater points out that even the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs did no damage outside of a sixteen-mile circle. The 1957 Los Angeles skyquakes, according to residents' claims, cracked plaster over an area two or three times as wide!

Of course, the Goldwater article, written for the aircraft industry, can be expected to minimize the damaging effects of aircraft-caused booms; and the sufferers from a skyquake, with an eye to compensation, can be expected to maximize their sufferings. Nonetheless, it seems quite evident that the effects of these "skyquake" shock waves are on an altogether larger scale than anything present-day aircraft could produce.

It should be noted, however, that even at the epicenter, the damage is never catastrophic. It seems safe to infer from this that these skyquakes must originate at very high altitude.

Several articles have appeared that discuss skyquakes

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on the assumption that they are caused by airplanes. According to Corey Ford ("The Truth About The Sonic Boom," *Sat. Eve. Post,* Dec. 4, 1954), plane-caused sonic booms were first noticed in March, 1950. "As soon as the cause was determined, the aviation industry and the U. S. Air Force acted promptly to safeguard the public. The strictest limitations were imposed. Today, supersonic tests are conducted only over the desert or open water. Any eager jet jockey who attempts a sonic buzz job over a populated district is subject to severe disciplinary action." In the same article are cited: Jan. 6, 1951: Los Angeles rocked by mysterious explosion. Dallas, Texas, Feb. 26, 1952: residents scurry into streets; four previous blasts in the same place. San Francisco area, April 8, 1953: frightened residents suspect earthquake. Nassau County, L.I., April 30, 1953: near-panic caused by "thunderous explosion." Chicago, June 24, 1953: mid-morning explosion starts "wild flying-saucer rumors." Tacoma, Wash.: windows smashed. Ottawa, Canada: plaster falls. Van Nuys, Calif.: houses sway, and residents see dark smoke-puff, expanding and turning white. Norfolk, Virginia; Boston, Mass.: are these "populated districts" or not? Ford does not tell us that any of these skyquakes was traced to an airplane; he merely takes it for granted that this must have been the case—without, apparently, feeling any astonishment at such widespread, flagrant, and persistent transgression of the "strict limitations" on supersonic dives by jet aircraft. In none of these cases does he mention any "severe disciplinary action" being taken; and yet—"what our startled cities had been hearing was the so-called sonic boom—latest phenomenon of the air age we live in." Was it?

The hundreds of instances discourage any attempt to give a representative account of the skyquakes of the last few years. For New Jersey alone, our clipping file—which is by no means complete—shows twenty since February, 1953. For example: At about 10:15 a.m. on April 2, 1957, a "mysterious blast" was heard and felt over a good two-thirds of the 8000 square miles of New Jersey, and in parts of eastern Pennsylvania. According to the N.Y. *Herald Tribune* of April 3, the concussion was felt from Dover, in the north, to Cape May, in the south—a distance of 150 miles. In Trenton, it cracked sidewalks and shook the State House. In Martinsville, a sidewalk and a swimming pool were cracked. Windows were smashed near New Bruns-

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wick, and a nightshift printer was thrown out of bed in Whitehouse. "McGuire Air Base denied that any of its jets had been operating." As in Los Angeles, local politicians felt they ought to "do something about it," and Rep. Peter Frelinghuysen Jr. asked the Defense Department to investigate. The result was interesting: "Air Force and Defense Department officials said they conducted all-day investigations but thus far have been unable to uncover anything that might explain the jarring explosion. They added that similar blasts have been occurring all over the country in recent years and *they have never yet been able to determine the cause.*" (Newark *Star-Ledger,* April 4; our italics.) While we were writing this, the following item appeared: "Sonic Boom Jars Jersey!... A loud noise startled New Jersey shortly before 11 a.m. yesterday. It was heard in five counties. In Elizabeth and Verona, householders rushed outside. In Teaneck, a lady said she was so surprised she fell out of her chair." (N.Y. *News,* July 24, 1957.) So much for Jersey skyquakes; we can be confident we have not heard the last of them.

The following cases are of some interest because of "something," evidently not a jet plane, seen in the air at the time of the concussion:

Near Burlington, Vermont, at 11 p.m. on January 29, 1952, two "heavy explosions" were felt; one woman complained that she was nearly shaken out of bed. Two cracks a quarter of an inch wide, one of them a mile long, appeared in the ground in the northern end of the city; yet seismographs recorded no earthquake. According to the N.Y. *Times,* Jan. 31, "flickering lights" were seen; no details given.

The Troy (N.Y.) *Record,* Oct. 10, 1952, tells of something being seen in the sky at the time of "a thundering explosion that rocked large portions of the Troy area at 11:25 a.m. yesterday morning... Conjecture likened the double shock to the unexplained jolt reported Wednesday in Poughkeepsie." Many reported that the blast was accompanied by a flash of light. Several people told of seeing a "skywriting plane" which exploded. A policeman saw "heavy black smoke" after the explosion, and a "circling plane, which he thought was in trouble." A cemetery caretaker looked up and saw an object which "had the speed of a jet plane and seemed to be headed east, leaving considerable smoke in its wake."[29]

But it was definitely ascertained that no plane was over the area. Was this a UFO? If the maneuvers reported by the policeman are authentic, it probably was; but the information is too scanty to

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rule out conclusively the hypothesis that a bolide exploded over Troy. (For what it is worth, "denials came that a meteor had exploded.")

If skyquakes cannot as a rule be pinned on jet planes, it seems natural to suppose that they might be attributable to flying saucers, making maneuvers at supersonic speed at high altitude. Unfortunately for this idea, investigation shows very little direct evidence in support of it. We know of very few unambiguous reports of a typical UFO being seen in the sky at the time of a typical skyquake. The Troy case just cited was equivocal. That which follows is more definite.

On the morning of January 7, 1954, a little before 4:30, an explosion of tremendous force broke windows in Dieppe, France, and was felt throughout the entire Seine-Inferieure department. Just before the blast, the sky had lit up in a brilliant burst of orange. One might assume that a great meteor had exploded. However, Aime Michel, in his book *The Truth About Flying Saucers,* tells us that a baker in Arras had seen an orange disc "as big as the full moon, but much brighter," which *hovered* for several seconds before describing a semi-circle and taking off toward the coast. A moment later came the brilliant orange light and then the skyquake that rocked Dieppe.

Another case exhibiting an association between aerial concussions and unorthodox sky objects appeared in Leonard Stringfield's C.R.I.F.O. *Orbit,* Nov. 2, 1956:

On Sept. 12, 1956, at 11:40 a.m., three sharp blasts within twenty seconds were heard in the sky over Corona, California. Houses shook and windows rattled. The sound seemed to come from the southeast. The Corona newspaper, after some fruitless inquiries, concluded that the explosions must have been sonic booms. However, it later developed that County Schools Consultant Dwight Lewis, "an erstwhile scoffer at flying saucer stories," who had been watching a nearby forest fire, had been astonished to see "a glittering oval-shaped aircraft" emerge from the smoke cloud at about 5000 feet altitude. It was "about the size of a close formation of eleven B-29s, cigar-shaped, with one side dark while the other had many spots that glistened like light metal... it was near the smoke, but was engulfed in a black oil-looking smoke of its own." This object "sort of wallowed down the valley...it seemed to be interested in the fires," and when apparently over Elsinore to the southeast, "its smoke seemed to puff in and out about three times or more,

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like it was breathing, and there seemed to be an explosion." The time given by Mr. Lewis was 11:30-11:35 a.m.

Even this, it will be noted, leaves room for some doubt as to whether the UFO was really the cause of the Corona skyquake; Mr. Lewis, though near Corona, does not mention hearing any sound after the apparent explosion off to the southeast. (Of course, if it was really several miles away, there would be a lag of a minute or so between seeing the explosion and feeling the blast wave.)

A New Jersey National Guard pilot recently added something extremely important to the Jersey skyquake of April 2nd, 1957—*if* we could be absolutely positive that it is authentic. The pilot concerned is vouched for by several people as apparently trustworthy, but we have not yet met him personally. According to his story, he was flying a private plane over northern New Jersey on the morning of April 2nd. Just before the widely-felt blast took place, his plane radio picked up a conversation between an unidentified air base and one of their jet pilots on an intercept mission to investigate a "bogey." Then came the crash of the blast. Immediately after the concussion, he heard the pilot tell his base: "I did not—repeat, *not*—break the sound barrier. *The object did.*"

It must be admitted that, in the present state of our knowledge, the case for connecting skyquakes with UFOs is not exactly overwhelming. If saucers are responsible for skyquakes at all, it seems that they usually generate the blast at such high altitudes as not to be noticed by ground observers. Perhaps, if we had access to radar data, something more significant might emerge.

But one thing, at least, is certain. Skyquakes may have increased in frequency in the jet age (or, if you prefer to think of it that way, in the "UFO age" that dates from 1947), but they are not a new phenomenon. Mysterious, repetitive explosions in the sky have been known for centuries, under other names. Charles Fort collected hundreds of examples. On Melida (now Mljet), an Adriatic island off what is now Yugoslavia, aerial detonations, some of "tremendous" force, were heard for three years, from March, 1822 to March, 1825; sometimes hundreds were heard in a day. The sounds were in the sky: they could not be heard underground. At Comrie, in Scotland, concussions were felt at intervals from 1597 through July 25, 1921, and likely enough are still continuing; they were originally supposed

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to be earthquake shocks, but according to an 1839 resident, "In every case, the sound seemed high in the air," and moreover, on several occasions black powder fell at Comrie after a shock. (This is a concomitant that has not yet been reported in modern skyquakes; but in a city, it would doubtless pass unnoticed.) East Haddam, Connecticut, has had a reputation for mysterious explosive noises since before the white man came; these "Moodus sounds," as the Indians called them, are heard every few years, as at Comrie. On the North Sea coast, such unaccountable explosive sounds are known as "mist-pouffers"; they are frequently heard over the North Sea, especially in misty weather. (See L. Palazzo, *Mistpouffers* (Budapest, 1912), and similar English examples in Fort, pp. 406ff, 438, 472ff.) In Bengal, India, they are known as "Barisal Guns." However, these repetitive concussions are typically muffled and distant-sounding, unlike the modern skyquake. More obviously a skyquake was the "great explosion" that alarmed London, Oct. 6, 1863; since there were then no jet planes to take the blame, when no terrestrial explosion could be found the concussion was called an earthquake. The phenomenon was repeated on Oct. 30, 1868 and again on Nov. 20, 1887. On the latter occasion it was attributed to the explosion of a bolide, because a few people said there was something in the sky (Fort, p. 447f.) Nov. 16, 1895: two violent explosions heard in London. Nov. 17, 1905: "consternation" caused in Reading, forty miles west of London, by explosive sounds in the sky at 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30 o'clock; attributed to bolides. Morning of Nov. 19, 1912: a terrific explosion heard in the air over Reading, London, and other points in an area at least fifty miles wide; called an "airquake" and attributed to a "meteoric explosion"; but it was repeated, with lesser intensity, over Reading on the 20th at 1:45, and the 21st at 3:30 (Fort, 511f.) (The singular preference of these Reading-London skyquakes for the autumn months is unmistakable, and incomprehensible on any "natural" grounds.) Jan. 12, 1916: buildings in Cincinnati shaken by explosion in sky. Sept. 25, 1919: violent sky explosion over Reading, England—attributed to "an explosion of a natural type up in the air."

None of these pre-1947 skyquakes involved definitely non-meteoric aerial objects. Here is a case—perhaps not a skyquake in the strict sense—that did.

On July 2, 1907, Burlington, Vermont was jarred by a "terrific" explosion. Several residents said that they had seen a yellow ball of fire come

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out of the northern sky and descend into College Street, where it exploded with a "deafening sound." A horse was knocked to the ground by the concussion. One person claimed he saw the fireball "rebound" into the sky again. About a block away, ex-Governor Woodbury was talking with Bishop John S. Michaud when the blast occurred. Looking down College Street, they saw what Michaud described as "a torpedo-shaped body some 300 feet away, suspended in the air about 50 feet above the tops of the buildings. In size, it was about 6 feet long by 8 inches in diameter, the shell or cover having a dark appearance, with here and there tongues of fire issuing from spots on the surface resembling red-hot, unburnished copper. Although stationary when first noticed, this object soon began to move, rather slowly, and disappeared to the southward. As it moved, the covering seemed rupturing in places, and through these the intensely red flames issued." (*Monthly Weather Review*, 1907, p. 310).

Let us sum up our case—such as it is:

(1) Mysterious aerial explosions—not to be explained as meteoric explosions, since they repeat in favoured localities—have long been known.

(2) However, there has been a marked increase in the frequency of such occurrences in the past few years—at least in the cities of the United States.

(3) Although it is rather difficult to distinguish these skyquakes from "sonic booms" caused by supersonic aircraft, the modern ones appear to be definitely larger-scale phenomena than aircraft would be capable of producing.

(4) Moreover, if they are caused by aircraft, this implies that strict military regulations are being violated by jet pilots with extraordinary and scandalous frequency—which seems highly unlikely.

(5) Moreover, we have the statements of the Defense Department itself that in the great majority of cases it is impossible to trace the concussions to aircraft.

(6) There is one piece of direct testimony that a skyquake was caused by a UFO; but this is at present unverified. There is also some suggestive evidence—not a great deal—in support of this hypothesis.

(7) Time, we hope, will tell.

The next article in this series will leave the ear and pass to the nose: we will present some noteworthy examples of Smells From The Sky.

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moment of truth

by BASIL WELLS

Beyond the false windows she could see the reddish wasteland where dust clouds spun and shifted so slowly.

SHE HAD been asleep. Now she stretched luxuriously beneath the crisp white sheet that the vapid August heat decreed. From memory to memory her dream-fogged mind drifted, and to the yet-to-be. It was good to remember, and to imagine, and to see and feel and hear...

She smiled. She was Ruth Halsey, fourteen, brunette, and pretty. Earl, and Harry, and Buhl had told her she was pretty. Especially Buhl. Buhl was her favorite date now.

The room closed around her with its familiar colors and furnishings. Sometimes she would dream that she was elsewhere, unfamiliar, ugly places, but then she would awaken to the four long windows with their coarse beige drapes of monk's cloth and the fantasies were forever dispelled.

Her eyes loved the two paintings, the dark curls of the pink-and-white doll sitting prissily atop the dresser, and the full length mirror on the open closet door.

The pictured design of the wallpaper, its background merging with the pastel blue of the slanted ceiling... Al-

Basil Wells, who lives in Pennsylvania, has been doing research concerning life in the area during the period prior to and following the War of 1812. Here he turns to a different problem—the adjustment demanded of a pioneer woman, not in those days but Tomorrow—on Mars.

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most as they had blended together that first day when she was twelve. Yet not the same, she corrected her thoughts, frowning. Sometimes, as today, the design seemed faded and changed. The gay little bridges and the flowered, impossibly blue trees seemed to change and threaten to vanish.

She laughed over at the demurely sitting doll. Essie had been her favorite doll when she was younger. Of course now that she was fourteen she did not play with dolls any more. But it was permissible that she keep her old friend neatly dressed and ever at hand as a confidant. She smiled at the thought. Essie never tattled.

"It must be from that polio," she told Essie, knowing all the time that she was almost well now and needed plenty of rest and careful doses of exercise. "It makes my eyes—funny."

Essie smiled back glassily and Ruth laughed. It was good to awaken and see the thick black arms of the maple tree outside the windows. It was good to have the cool green leaves waving at her, and see the filtered dapplings of sunshine cross and recross them.

She loved that old tree. She had played among its long horizontal branches from childhood. Her brother, Alex, who had been killed in the Normandy Landing during World War Third, had loved the tree too. He had built the railed, shingled-roofed little nest high up in the tree's crotched heart where Ruth kept some of her extra-special notes and jewelry and a book of poems.

One of the two paintings on the bedroom walls was of the old tree. The tree dominated the old story-and-a-half white house with the green shutters that was the Halsey's home. Her home. Alex had painted that picture as well as the other showing the graceful loop of the river and the roofs of the village of Thayer in the distance. Ruth had been with him as he painted that second picture from the jutting rock ledge five hundred feet above the river.

"I was just ten then, Essie," she chirped gaily. "I remember how afraid I was of the height and how Alex scolded."

But Alex was dead now and all she had to remember of him was the paintings and the photographs that Mother kept in a battered brown leather folder. For a moment the bright sunlight in her beloved maple tree's leaves seemed to dim and the room wavered about her. She wondered about that. She must tell her father or her mother.

Perhaps the polio, light touch of it or not, had hurt her eyesight. Glasses! She shuddered at the thought.

The room shimmered and

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blurred--and suddenly broke apart to reform into something... She squinched her eyes shut to the hideous vision. And then opened them the merest slit.

Nothing had changed...

"M O T H E R!" she cried. "Daddy!" she cried. "What has happened?"

She heard the door to—to this hideous travesty of a room opening. Her eyes darted around the shrunken metal-walled shell, even the ceiling curved overhead, and she saw two grotesque daubs taped to the walls that parodied the paintings of her dead brother Alex. The coloring was ugly and the proportions out of line. And it was not canvas but curling sheets of paper taped and painted to resemble frames!

A big man, sandy-haired and with vertical wrinkles deep between piercing blue eyes, came into the room. She shrank into the bed, seeing that the sheet she tugged taut across her breast was ragged and blue.

"Ruth," he said, a slow smile making his face almost h a n d s o m e, "you're better. You haven't s p o k e n in weeks."

Ruth wanted to giggle. As though they could keep her quiet. Daddy was always shushing her... But who was this big man in his dusty drab coveralls and dropped dust mask dangling upon his chest?

"Don't you know me, Dear? It's Buhl, your husband."

Buhl was fifteen and only a couple of inches taller than Ruth. Of course he had sandy hair like this man. But this man was old enough to be Buhl's father. This was crazy —like one of the dreams that always made her unhappy.

So? So it was a dream. She felt warmth and release. Why not see what this dream had to offer that might be amusing to remember and tell B u h l s o m e t i m e s o o n. Wouldn't he laugh when he heard she had dreamed about him? And been married to him.

She saw the strip of shiny metal that masqueraded as her mirror, and where her four long windows, with their thick, l o o s e-woven drapes, had been there were only four taped strips of paper with crude pictures of draped windows daubed on them. There were even green dabs of paint and black splashes to stimulate her beloved maple tree.

"Ruth! Do you feel better now? Please don't smile at me like that. I know you loved the baby, but this Martian atmosphere is tough even for men. It wasn't your fault."

"Go ahead and talk." Ruth laughed gaily. "This is just another bad dream and I know it. I'll wake up in a little while and be back in my cool old room."

"Blast your room and your dreams!"

The man went across the

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room in a swift rush and tore down one of the false windows, the painted strip of paper. And beyond, through a dusty oval glass window, Ruth could see a reddish brown wasteland, where dust clouds spun and shifted slowly, and a dusty huddle of what looked like quonset huts or storage sheds of metal.

"That is reality, Ruth. You must face it. This pretense, this sleazy imitation of your old room is wrong. You're strong enough, and I love you —you can accept truth."

His face changed, all expression sponged from it in an instant as he looked into her eyes, and then it seemed to dissolve into something ugly and yet childish. She saw tears burst through and furrow the dust on his cheeks.

"Dear Lord," he cried, almost reverently, "must this go on forever? Will she ever come back to me?"

His voice choked off and he stumbled across the room and out the door. She heard it shut behind him, and she was hunting for Essie, already having forgotten the ill-mannered intruder.

There was no Essie, only a mannikin of cloth-stuffed white nylon and lipstick, with black nylon for hair.

And then the room shimmered and broke apart and reformed and she was back in her bed with the sun on the slowly dancing green leaves outside the four long windows. Essie was smiling down at her from the dresser, and the paintings were as always, soft colors and perfectly drafted.

Had she thought there were four windows? How silly of her. The second from the right was a small oval of glass, or rather, a glass-covered picture of desert scene. Odd that she had forgotten about that picture. Oh well, what did it matter.

In a few days she would be well enough again to climb out on the giant limbs and into the tree nest that her brother, Alex, had built. And the boys would come to see her and take her to the drugstore for sodas and sundaes.

Yes, she was sure now. She *did* like Buhl Austin best...

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resurrection

JAN 1962

by ROBERT J. SHEA

They had been cramped for space, him and his people. Obviously this new age had solved the problem better.

"YOU'RE a fascinating person," the girl said. "I've never met anyone like you before. Tell me your story again."

The man was short and stocky, with Asiatic features and a long, stringy mustache. "The whole story?" he asked. "It would take a lifetime to tell you." He stared out the window at the yellow sun and the red sun. He still hadn't gotten used to seeing two suns. But that was minor, really, when there were so many other things he had to get used to.

A robot waiter, with long thin metal tubes for arms and legs, glided over. When he'd first seen one of those, he'd thought it was a demon. He'd tried to smash it. They'd had trouble with him at first.

"They had trouble with me at first," he said.

"I can imagine," said the girl. "How did they explain it to you?""

"It was hard. They had to give me the whole history of medicine. It was years before I got over the notion that I was up in the Everlasting Blue Sky, or under the earth,

Robert J. Shea returns with this intriguing short-short predicting a not too distant future where medicine, not content with stimulating life and new growth in people who had already died, goes on to further experiments which the late Baron von Franckenstein would have found very interesting.

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or something." He grinned at the girl. She was the first person he'd met since they got him a job and gave him a home in a world uncountable light years from the one he'd been born on.

"When did you begin to understand?"

"They simply taught all of history to me. Including the part about myself. Then I began to get the picture. Funny. I wound up teaching them a lot of history."

"I bet you know a lot."

"I do," the man with the Asiatic features said modestly. "Anyway, they finally got across to me that in the 22nd century—they had explained the calendar to me, too; I used a different one in my day—they had learned how to grow new limbs on people who had lost arms and legs."

"That was the first real step," said the girl.

"It was a long time till they got to the second step," he said. "They learned how to stimulate life and new growth in people who had already died."

"The next part is the thing I don't understand," the girl said.

"Well," said the man, "as I get it, they found that any piece of matter that has been part of an organism, retains a physical 'memory' of the entire structure of the organism of which it was part. And that they could reconstruct that structure from a part of a person, if that was all there was left of him. From there it was just a matter of pushing the process back through time. They had to teach me a whole new language to explain that one."

"Isn't it wonderful that intergalactic travel gives us room to expand?" said the girl. "I mean now that every human being that ever lived has been brought back to life and will live forever?"

"Same problem I had, me and my people," said the man. "We were cramped for space. This age has solved it a lot better than I did. But they had to give me a whole psychological overhauling before I understood that."

"Tell me about your past life," said the girl, staring dreamily at him.

"Well, six thousand years ago, I was born in the Gobi Desert, on Earth," said Genghis Khan, sipping his drink.

The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society's 16th Annual Fall Conference takes place on Saturday, November 9, 1957, at the Hotel Sylvania, Locust Street off Broad, Philadelphia. For further information contact George R. Heap, 513 Glen Echo Road, Philadelphia 19, Pennsylvania.

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the forgotten ones

by STEPHEN BOND

There was no trace of the legendary beings who had once ruled the land before the desert had taken over.

They must have been extraordinary beings, those who were here once and who, as we are told, created the First of us.

There are some ruins, some distance away from our Community of the Creative Ones. It is a chastening experience to go out there, to move there among the rubble, and to realize that these stones, that these broken pillars, that these symbols which none of us quite understand, are all that remain of the curious culture that preceeded ours.

A least in terms of survival, we must be an improvement upon these beings whose very appearance is forgotten today. Granted that they must have had a strange genius of their own, to have created the First of us as the history tapes say they did, but it is strange that nowheres, nowheres on this land where we exist, is there a clue to what these beings actually looked like.

There are, it is true, three figures, made out of a material that our analysis section does not recognize, standing

Three figures, made out of a material that nobody knows anything about, stand among the ruins that are all that is left of the civilization of the Forgotten Ones. Stephen Bond describes, in our cover story, the emotions of the robot artist as he paints these puzzling figures out of the dim past.

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against one of the few walls (I believe that is the word) that time has not completely destroyed. Some romantics in our community—in successive experiments some of the master technicians have introduced this thought-variant among us—some romantics have suggested that these figures are representations of the Forgotten Ones. This is obvious nonsense.

They are ugly things, these figures. The purpose of the one in the center is difficult to understand—there is nothing in the stored experience of any of us that helps in deciding the possible function of such a being. But it is the other figures that are stranger.

One of them stands there, graceless and curiously constructed, both appendages—arms, as the Old Ones among us call them—raised high as if in supplication. Here is an obvious lack of functional purpose.

The other is even weirder. It is impossible to believe that this is, as the romantics declare, one of the Forgotten Ones, somehow turned into this figure of a graceless and non-functional being, holding its spare head in an extension. The Brothers who claim that it was beings like these who created the First Ones are fools. It is impossible that things like these could have had the imagination, or the knowledge, to be the creators of our Founders.

As an artist, I can appreciate the challenge of the cloying softness of their lines, so different from our own superior form, but as a member of the community I can reject the suggestion that these are anything more than examples of the Forgotten Ones.

The romantics are not the only ones with imagination.

Perhaps these were early models from which the Master Technicians of those days worked, improving upon them until they developed the Perfect Member. It is challenging to speculate, while painting these figures, on what the Forgotten Ones must have really looked like. They must have been giant brain-cells in those days to have developed members of the community such as us from miserable and weak looking beginnings.....

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ignatius donnelly pseudomath

by L. SPRAGUE de CAMP

He was certain that Atlantis had existed, and that it was from there that man had first begun the long climb upwards.

A PSEUDOMATH is one who appears or pretends to possess great learning but really lacks it, or whose knowledge, while seemingly vast, is largely false. America's greatest pseudomath was Ignatius Donnelly (1831-1901): lawyer, promoter, politician, reformer, scholar, author, lecturer, science-fiction writer, and pseudo-scientific cultist.

Donnelly was a man "with an extremely active mind, but possessing also that haste to form judgments and the lack of critical sense in testing them, which are often the result of self-education conducted by wide and unsystematic reading." Not only was he the leading American science-fiction writer of his day. He was also responsible for popularizing three of the most durable pseudo-intellectual cults that have come down to the present: Baconianism, Atlantism, and cometary catastrophism. Of these, Atlantism has become a cliche of science fiction. The other two beliefs, if never taken very seriously in science-fiction circles, are of equal interest to

L. Sprague de Camp, noted as a historian and popularizer of science, has been prominent in the science fiction and fantasy field for the past twenty years. He is the author of LOST CONTINENTS (Gnome Press, $5.), a definitive work on the Atlantis theme in history and literature.

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the connoisseur of human folly.

Many would like to be thought of as wise and learned. Some try to become so. A few succeed. Success in the pursuit of wisdom takes not only brains and the power of original thought, but also the power of self-criticism. Without self-criticism, a strong and original mind is like a vehicle with an engine but no brakes or steering-gear. It takes its owner down intellectual blind alleys or mires him in the swamps of cultism. Donnelly is a case in point, though modern science fiction has shown some egregious examples of this failing.

Donnelly's early history shows little sign of his later flights into lands of mental faerie. Born in Philadelphia to a prosperous family of Irish immigrants, he studied law, was admitted to the bar, married, and in 1856 moved to Minnesota.

His arrival in the Gopher State showed the first sign of his bent for high-minded fantasy. A syndicate of which he was a member bought a tract about ten miles southeast of St. Paul on the south bank of the Mississippi. Here, they thought, should rise the great metropolis of the Midwest, outshining not only the Twin Cities but even distant Chicago. It should be called Nininger City.

As his part in this promotion, Donnelly put out a periodical, the *Emigrant Aid Journal*. Below a masthead showing "steamboats, railroad trains, covered wagons, men plowing, wheat growing, and fruits and vegetables of truly startling girth" appeared such weighty contributions as poems by Whittier and essays by Mrs. Stowe. Whether or not the high intellectual tone of the paper repelled the emigrants, they failed to settle in Nininger City, despite the attractions of the local inn and of the Literary Society and the Musical Club. Today a little blue circle on a road-map of the Twin Cities region bears the name "Nininger," but it is well the "City" has been dropped. Not only is there no city; there is nothing, not even a crossroad. After tracking back and forth on secondary roads, you learn you have passed through Nininger, but you have seen nothing but Minnesota farmland and woodlots.

When real estate failed to profit him, Donnelly went into politics, at first with striking success. He became Lieutenant-Governor of the brand-new state of Minnesota in 1858, at the age of twenty-eight. In 1864 he went to the U. S. House of Representatives for two terms. When not arguing on the floor for vigorously pushing the Civil War and for buying Alaska, he spent his time in the Libra-

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ry of Congress soaking up facts and becoming perhaps the most erudite Congressman ever to hold office.

Now, however, his brain had begun to burn with the first of his great ideas: Atlantis. After a term in the State Senate, he retired to the rambling wooden mansion he had built at Nininger and tried to support himself by farming while, with the help of the bulky notes he had taken in Washington, he scratched away at his book. By 1881 he was almost broke, but in 1882 Harper brought out the work: *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World*. In this work he set out to prove:

"1. That there once existed in the Atlantic Ocean, opposite the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea, a large island, which was the remnant of an Atlantic continent, and known to the ancient world as Atlantis.

"2. That the description of this island given by Plato is not, as has long been supposed, fable, but veritable history.

"3. That Atlantis was the region where man first rose from a state of barbarism to civilization.

"4. That it became, in the course of ages, a populous and mighty nation, from whose overflowings the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, the Mississippi River, the Amazon, the Pacific coast of South America, the Mediterranean, the west coast of Europe and Africa, the Baltic, the Black Sea, and the Caspian were populated by civilized nations.

"5. That it was the true Antediluvian world; the Garden of Eden; the Gardens of Hesperides; the Elysian Fields; the Gardens of Alcinous; the Mesomphalos; the Olympos; the Asgard of the traditions of the ancient nations; representing a universal memory of a great land, where early mankind dwelt for ages in peace and happiness.

"6. That the gods and goddesses of the ancient Greeks, the Phoenicians, the Hindoos, and the Scandinavians were simply the kings, queens, and heroes of Atlantis; and the acts attributed to them in mythology are a confused recollection of real historical events.

"7. That the mythology of Egypt and Peru represented the original religion of Atlantis, which was sun-worship.

"8. That the oldest colony formed by the Atlanteans was probably in Egypt, whose civilization was a reproduction of that of the Atlantic island.

"9. That the implements of the 'Bronze Age' of Europe were derived from Atlantis. The Atlanteans were also the first manufacturers of iron.

"10. That the Phoenician al-

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phabet, parent of all European alphabets, was derived from an Atlantean alphabet, which was also conveyed from Atlantis to the Mayas of Central America.

"11. That Atlantis was the original seat of the Aryan or Indo-European family of nations, as well as of the Semitic peoples, and possibly also of the Turanian races.

"12. That Atlantis perished in a terrible convulsion of nature, in which the whole island sunk into the ocean, with nearly all its inhabitants.

"13. That a few persons escaped in ships and on rafts, and carried to the nations east and west tidings of the appalling catastrophe, which has survived to our own time in the Flood and Deluge legends of the different nations in the old and new worlds."

Though the book's erudition is likely to stun the reader into accepting its theses without resistance, and though Donnelly's tone is sweetly reasonable compared to the Atlantist writings of the occultists, *Atlantis* is in fact a careless, tendentious, and worthless opus, a solid mass of misstatements of fact and errors of interpretation. Donnelly assumed that the Egyptian civilization blossomed suddenly without antecedents; that similar customs or techniques among widely-separated peoples necessarily point to a common origin; that the American Indian languages are closely related to Greek, Hebrew, and other Old-World tongues; that the Mayan alphabet resembles the Phoenician; and so on, none of which is true at all.

Donnelly took ideas from Plato's *Timaios* and *Kritias* and from the Atlantist writings of various scholars who dabbled in the subject from Plato's time down. For instance, the notion of a common origin of the civilizations of the Mayas and the Mediterranean peoples had been put forward by the American Edward H. Thompson and L. H. Hosea. Thompson, then an undergraduate, had speculated in a magazine-article that refugees from Atlantis had spread to the Great Lakes and thence to Mexico. Later he became a leading Mayologist and disclaimed his juvenile Atlantis ideas. Now we know that such a common origin is ruled out by chronology, since Mayan civilization only arose in the early centuries of the Christian era, when Egypt was already three thousand years old and had become a Roman province.

However, the concept of Atlantis as the fount of all civilization is essentially Donnelly's. It goes far beyond anything Plato ever claimed in his Atlantis-legend.

The book soon became a best-seller. It was read with approval by Gladstone in Eng-

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land and made the subject of poems and popular jokes. It went through at least fifty printings, the last in 1949. The last edition was edited by a British Atlantist, Egerton Sykes, who corrected some of Donnelly's errors at the cost of bringing in some of his own. (Sykes also castigated an anti-Atlantist named "J. Sprague du Camp" for the latter's rough treatment of Plato.)

Atlantis was also a major source on which Helena P. Blavatsky based her Theosophical doctrines, though she claimed to get these doctrines from the prehistoric *Book of Dzyan*, which her Himalayan Mahatmas translated for her. All the later Atlantist writers drew on Donnelly directly or indirectly. Later Atlantis added other lost continents in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, in cheerful defiance of all that science has learned in the last hundred years about the past of mankind of the earth on which it dwells.

Furthermore, Donnelly's *Atlantis* was one of the sources of the many Atlantean stories that appeared in imaginative fiction thenceforward. The other main founts of this sub-genre were the works of Donnelly's contemporary Augustus Le Plongeon, a French physician who lived in Yucatan and was the first to excavate the Mayan ruins, and Jules Verne's brief use of the remains in his *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1869). The peak of this vogue of Atlantean tales occurred in the decade 1896-1905, when at least sixteen novels appeared on the theme. They have continued to come out from time to time, along with scores of Atlantean magazine stories and a few Atlantean movies.

Now back on his financial feet, Donnelly wrote *Ragnarok: The Age of Fire and Ice* (1883). This revived an idea with which Count Carli had speculated a century before: that once upon a time the earth collided with a comet, with catastrophic results. Again Donnelly added his own contributiions. He explained deposits of glacial gravel, which Agassiz had correctly attributed to the Ice Age, as the remains of the comet itself. Donnelly suggested that there had been a world-wide prehistoric civilization which the comet blotted out everywhere but in Atlantis. The book had a good though not spectacular sale. It took its place in the literature of the cometary-collision cult, which Horbiger and Velikovsky had carried on in the twentieth century.

Then Donnelly went lecturing. He proved an excellent public speaker: a plump, handsome man, clean-shaven amid a forest of beards, and radiating charm and good hu-

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mor. He looked a little like his younger contemporary William Jennings Bryan.

Another idea, however, had now begun to burn in Donnelly's fertile brain. This took shape in a book, *The Great Cryptogram* (1888) which purported to prove by code-analysis that Sir Francis Bacon wrote the plays attributed to William Shakespeare.

This notion had first been proposed as a joke in the previous century by Horace Walpole, in one of a series of essays in which he undertook to prove among other things that Julius Caesar never lived. In the early nineteenth century, several others took up Walpole's Shakespearean suggestion, but treating it seriously instead of as a piece of learned foolery as Walpole meant it. Notably among these was Delia Bacon, a prudish Bostonian schoolteacher shocked by the repulsive thought that the author of the wonderful plays and sonnets could have been an associate of a lot of vulgar, immoral actors. While Miss Bacon did not urge Sir Francis as a substitute for poor Will, others like William H. Smith and Joseph G. Hart in England soon added this feature.

Bacon had, in fact, written of cryptograms in his *Advancement of Learning* and proposed one based on the use of two different fonts of type, mixed, to print the cover-text. This was perhaps practical in Bacon's day, when a printer who ran short of a given letter in one font would use anything he had in the shop.

Donnelly, though, attacked Shakespeare on his own cryptographic principles. He found places where words like "bacon," "William," and "play" appeared and counted the number of words between them. He tried to make something of the irregularities of the page-numbers of the First Folio. His final system of decipherment was based on the numbers 505, 506, 513, 523, used in counting from one word to the next. If these didn't work, one might use other factors such as the number of words in different subdivisions of the page, and so on, adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing at will until things came out right. Not to leave any stone unturned, Donnelly implied that Bacon (an active politician and a voluminous writer under his own name) also wrote works ascribed to Marlowe, Montaigne and Burton.

Real cryptographers greeted this nonsense with howls of derision. They pointed out that, according to Donnelly's reasoning, Shakespeare wrote the Forty-sixth Psalm. The 46th word from the beginning is "shake," and the 46th word from the end is "spear"; QED.

Donnelly, no whit abashed, set off in two new directions

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at once: science fiction and the Populist Movement. Under the name of "Edmund Boisgilbert, M.D." he wrote a prophetic novel, *Caesar's Column: A Story of the Twentieth Century* (1890) which sold a million copies. This is probably more sales than those of all the cloth-bound science fiction novels published in the last decade put together.

The story is laid in mid-twentieth century; in other words, about now. A youth from a Swiss colony in Africa, Gabriel Weltstein, awed by the glass-roofed streets, lit by "magnetic lights" and jammed with people; the municipal heating-system, which gets hot water from the depths of the earth; the pneumatic-tube network linking subscribers all over the city; the suicide-houses where people are given a painless quietus on request; the airlines and elevated railways crisscrossing overhead.

Sitting down in a restaurant, Gabriel sees a mirror-like thing on which the menu appears as on a television screen. When he makes his choice by pressing buttons below the screen, the table opens and up comes his dinner. Another button brings a facsimile of a newspaper to the screen. The restaurant is air-conditioned by a canvas tube carried aloft by a balloon to exhaust the hot air in the restaurant and replace it by cold air drawn down from the stratosphere.

One day, Gabriel snatches a beggar from under the hooves of the coach-horses of one of the wicked world-ruling oligarchy of bankers. The beggar turns out to be a leader of the downtrodden masses. Gabriel is drawn into the revolutionary conspiracy. Alas, the masses have been so degraded by their servitude that when the revolution succeeds, they kill off all their better leaders. Hence the world sinks into barbarism everywhere except in Swiss Uganda.

Caesar's Column was followed by *Dr. Huguet* (1891) and *The Golden Bottle; or, The Story of Ephraim Benezet of Kansas* (1892). *Dr. Huguet* explored the Negro problem by the now well-worn device of transposing souls. To make his Caucasoid hero appreciate the plight of the free but unequal American Negro, Donnelly puts his soul into the body of one.

The Golden Bottle is a kind of alchemical dream. The narrator dreams that a mysterious stranger gives him a liquid that turns base metals to gold. By this power he becomes a financial titan. Then he conquers the world with the help of his girl-friend, who dashes about on horseback with him in the midst of the bloody battles by which he subdues the British Isles and Europe. He abolishes all

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kings and aristocracies and imposes American-style democracy on everybody whether they like it or not. By this time Donnelly seems to have gotten over his earlier anti-judaeism, for he gives Palestine to the Jews in the course of reforming the world. Then the narrator wakes up. This denouement, as it always does, leaves the reader feeling cheated.

While writing these novels, Donnelly was helping to launch the Populist Party as a vehicle for Western agrarian radicalism. Starting in politics as a Republican, he became a Democrat after being defeated for Congress in 1868. Now he joined the third-party movement of the moment. He wrote the Populist Omaha Platform of 1892 and twice ran for Vice-President of the United States on the Populist ticket. Defeat left him as good-humored as ever.

Donnelly's science-fiction novels are shot through with Populist principles. These included low tariffs, printing-press inflation, the prohibition of monopolies, the graduated income-tax, and a morbid fear of those imaginary bogey-men of agrarianism and of Henry Ford, the international bankers.

Donnelly wrote a few minor works and then died on New Year's Day, 1901. Widowed, he had in his sixties married a 21-year-old girl. Although brought up in the Roman Catholic faith, he never worked at it. This fact encouraged political rivals to blast him as an atheist. In his later years, like many shrewder men, he dabbled in Spiritualism.

Of the Populist ideals he fought for, the income-tax and anti-trust legislation, at first denounced as communistic, are now accepted facts. Inflation, presented by the Populists as a cure-all, is now viewed as a not altogether escapable evil. Ironically, Donnelly is remembered far more for his pseudo-scientific enthusiasms than for some of his later realized progressive political proposals.

His papers, ninety-nine file-boxes of them, lie in the archives of the Historical Society of Minnesota in St. Paul. A few years ago I heard that a man was using these papers to write a definitive biography of Donnelly on a grant from some learned society, but as far as I know the book has not appeared.

As for his mansion, a few years ago there was a move in the Minnesota legislature to restore it. However, a look at the place showed that it was so far gone in ruin that it would cost as much to fix it up as to build a new house. The Minnesota climate is merciless to old wooden houses, especially after a leaking roof and broken windows let in the elements. A

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contractor agreed to tear the wreck down for the lumber, but lost money on the deal.

Now the site is occupied by a neat modern farmhouse belonging to a family named Held. When I was there a couple of years ago, I could not even find an old brick or board from the mansion to take away as a souvenir of one of the most original and active minds in the history of American thought.

Despite his virtues, Donnelly's Atlantean commentary, and Baconian speculations have left no more mark on serious science and literary history than his mansion has left on the plains of Minnesota. His "discoveries" have withered away to mere intellectual fossils, amusing but impotent. He wrote on water, because, for all his intelligence, erudition, and goodwill, he lacked the power of self-criticism. Let him who would profit from others' follies ponder the tale of Ignatious Donnelly, pseudomath.

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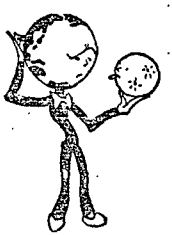

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by the beard of the comet

by KENNETH BULMER

The gallows stretched forty strong in a grim double line. Under each stood three men, two armed, one ready to die.

SOME MEN have the cheerily rubicund face of perennial bachelorhood and some men have a wife. Some men have fur-coated wives and smoke Corona-Coronas and some men just have fur-coated wives.

Bigelow Paynter merely had a wife. He slammed across the living room to the front door and his rabbitty face showed all its symptoms of weak and petty anger. "All right! All right! So I don't earn enough, I'm a shiftless bum and Pentland won't give me a raise!"

There was a humming in his ears. "If I ask that fat slob for a raise he'll throw me out. And then where would you be?"

Lottie Paynter kept back her sharp retort, and wondered what had happened to the man she'd married. "You could ask for it," she said patiently. "You can't be sacked for just asking."

"Oh, no!" Unreasoning fear showed in Paynter's face. "Oh no! That's all you stupid women know. So you want I should be president of Mercury Spacers?"

He yanked the door open,

Ken Bulmer, who returns with this slightly less than sedate excursion into the future, has been called England's hardest working science fiction writer. Increasingly well known here, and a very interesting writer, he has been reading and writing science fiction since the twenties.

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ignoring his wife's little cry of protest.

"I'm going out. For some real life, not this eternal bickering with you. And I don't know when I'll be back!"

He flung himself round to the local flea-pit sensi-theatre, bought a ticket and slouched into the seat with a trembling anger at the world's uneven distribution of wealth. And if he hadn't made it up with Lottie by tonight he'd be irritable at the office in the morning, probably make mistakes and that old bear Pentland would have another excuse to dock more salary and that would mean another row with Lottie. He felt very badly done-by as he fastened the spectacles in place, attached electrodes and sensi-equipment to his body. He was consumed by a mad desire to hurt people, destroy things, to escape from his own drab little world into a greater universe of magnificent deeds and heroic adventure.

He selected a space pirate story, completely impossible and filled with the promise of colour and excitement and blood. For an hour, at least, he could forget Lottie and Pentland and his job and all the petty worries of the real world. He pressed the starter button and held the situation lever at normal. The sensi-equipment took his personality, transcribed it into the pre-fabricated story, integrated him as the master actor.

It was all garish, overdone, melodramatic corn; but it fitted his mood like a dynamo armature.

He not only saw, heard and smelt what was going on; he became a part of it. The outside world vanished.

Rank on rank of gleaming interstellar police cruisers swept through the ebon majesty of space, starlight picking out in lines of fire gunports, astradomes and the projecting bulk of airlocks. The police ships wheeled like vultures. They swept past in rigid echelon, raced towards Arcturus.

Secure behind his hyper space screen, Black Captain Paynter laughed at the clumsy fools and shouted for the captives taken in the last raid. At his feet jewels and silks, furs and priceless trappings lay in a profusion of careless wealth. He kicked a platinum cup aside, swaggered wide-shouldered down the control room of his space cruiser *Hawk of the Void*. He stuck his thumbs in his scarlet sash and leered as burly crewmen dragged in the screaming captives.

By the gods of space! This was the life for a man! He was no one's servant and master of anything he could take with his strong right hand. What the Universe refused him he took in the pitiless flame of his blasters.

"Here, my dark-haired

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beauty." He caught at the slim, bare shoulders of a girl, pressed his lips to hers, tasting the hot richness of vibrant life. She slapped him across the mouth. He leaned back, bellowing with laughter, his mouth a red cavern in the bristling blackness of his beard.

"That's how I like 'em! Full of spirit!" He flung the girl aside, glowered down at the rest of the captives.

"Spare us, noble captain," pleaded an old man, his purple pupils and nails betraying his Sirian origin. "We have done you no harm."

"No harm!" bellowed Black Captain Paynter, hands arrogantly on hips. "By the beard of the comet—no harm! You're breathing the same air as I am, polluting it, and you say you've done me no harm." His mouth twisted in cruel decision. "Ho, guards. Take me these fools and let them walk the plank from hyperspace to real space."

The crewmen guffawed. One spat out: "How they'll love being infinitely long before they snap! Ho! Ho!"

"Wait!" The girl Paynter had flung aside knelt all asprawl before him, her hair covering his garish spaceboots. "Spare them, captain, I beg of you."

"Take me this trash away!" Paynter began, then stopped, as the old Sirian said quickly:

"I can pay much ransom, noble captain. You would receive a great reward if I return safely."

"Ransom! By the beard of the comet, you speak well." Paynter snatched up a golden goblet of Martian wine, spilling some on the girl at his feet, downed the fiery liquor at a gulp. "Write a screed to your kin, a million solars—not a soldi less!"

In the darkness of the theatre Bigelow Paynter licked his lips and wriggled the left cardiac electrode into a more comfortable position. Lottie was almost forgotten; but he hadn't received the full kick from that last grandiloquent gesture. A million solars, bandied about like that! That should have made his heart lurch: all he'd had was a mild stimulus. Cheapjack fleapit theatre. You couldn't trust anyone in this world. They'd chiselled his money from him. He went back to the Hawk of the Void *sighing and thrust the situation lever all the way over to full stimulus.*

Black Captain Paynter's cloth of gold cloak fell in regal folds as he stepped towards the viewport. His rapier hung from a baldrick that was a single band of precious gems. Beneath his feet the level rumble of the hydrotonic engines told of immense energies flinging his ship through space. Black Captain Paynter was on the prowl again!

Rising above shipboard

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noises rapped the clatter of running feet. Paynter whirled, hand on sword-hilt, black beard bristling. Men raced into the control room. They cut down guards who sprang to stop them, yelled like blood-hungry wolves, made straight for Paynter.

"Mutiny!" Paynter whipped out his rapier. "Mutiny, by the beard of the comet!" His blade dissolved into a silver blur of speed. He lunged, pierced, leaped back nimbly, jumped onto the chart table. Hostile blades whickered round his knees. He slashed down, cutting down more of the rabble, roaring a circle of living light. Blood flew in the glare of artificial lamps. A few loyal spacemen ranged alongside their captain.

As the shining blades crossed and sang, the blood pounded in Paynter's veins, dropped a red curtain of lusty enjoyment over his eyes. This was life!

In the theatre Bigelow Paynter gripped the armrests of his seat in utter absorption; in the heightened drama of his imaginary life he found nothing incongruous among all the flickering sword-play in the blaster hanging in its holster at his belt.

"Come on, ye weak-bellied heathen! Cross swords with Black Captain Paynter, King of the Spaceways!"

He had the sensation lever over all the way, now, drinking in this strong potion, revelling in the heady wine of dreams.

Lottie Paynter sat furiously before the switched-off electronic stove in their flat, and strove to see her husband in the cold light of objective realism. He was a meek little man, who needed to be pushed into the sticky situations of life. Asking for a raise was a laughable trifle; yet he was scared stiff of this Pentland, the big boss at the office. So she had to goad him, work him up, get him all primed to blow up and go into the office ready to demand it—and what happened? She could have bitten her tongue in frustrated annoyance. She'd worked him up, got him steamed-up and ready, a good fourteen hours too soon.

Those last few delicate pushes at psychological buttons had, seen in bitter hindsight, quite obviously been too heavy-handed and now poor Bigelow had stalked out to sublimate all that carefully prepared emotion in the trashy sensi-theatre. To waste it. Lottie was an exceedingly embittered woman.

And then, coming like all truly great ideas fully fleshed from the first conception, she saw what she must do.

A smile touched her thin mouth. She rose, wrapping her synthivelour coat around her body, knowing that that body was magnificent enough

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for any man not half as meek as Bigelow. She might not be the best of wives; but she knew what she wanted for her man, and she intended to do everything in her power to ensure that he got what she wanted.

At that moment Paynter was standing with the harsh surface of the planetoid stretching away a few hundred yards to the foreshortened horizon. Hanging above him a silver sheen reflected from the *Hawk of the Void*. Black Captain Paynter glared about him at the assembled crew, his natty spacesuit showing off his bulging muscles and broad shoulders, his baldrick neatly lying between his airtanks.

In a grim double line the gallows stretched forty strong to the horizon. Under each stark gibbet a tableau was etched in black and silver. Two men under each, heavily-armed, supporting a third half-fainting wretch—that was the way to treat mutineers!

"By the beard of the comet!" Paynter surveyed the doomed men from merciless eyes. "String 'em up! And make sure their magnetic boots are square over the metal blocks. Up with 'em!"

Bigelow Paynter squirmed uncomfortably. He let the sensation lever fall back. This wasn't quite his idea of living it up, of experiencing a vicarious thrill; hanging men smacked too much of the macabre. Hard on that thought, as though forced by it, the screen washed clear, flushed with ultramarine and ribbed lavender and grey and cleared to show a vast palace chamber richly hung with cloth of gold tapestries and alive with the flash and shimmer of gems.

Paynter stared through the slit in the curtained alcove with calculating eyes. The slave girl who had arranged for his surreptitious entry glided towards him, put down her amphora and began to whisper swiftly.

"Tonight is the night. You must strike boldly and well. No flinching. Captain Pentland is a man devoid of mercy. If you fail....".

"I won't fail. By the beard of the comet, no!"

"I'll warn your men."

"Tell 'em I'll have my eye on each separate spaceman. They'll not flinch. They'll have me to reckon with!"

"And you have a way with you, Black Captain Paynter." She stared at him with smouldering eyes, then picked up her amphora and undulated away.

There flamed the familiar reddish zig-zag indicating a lapse of time. Now the palace was ablaze with torches, radium globes, flaming ruby in the hands of ebon slaves. This frontier planet of Illycardium was asprawl with the ill-got-

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ten gains of Three-eyed Jasper Pentland, the king of the Arcturian pirates. Captain Paynter meant to transfer ownership of those riches.

The signal came on the entry of Jaspar Pentland. He was immensely fat, a white woman on his right arm, a green curved thing from Sirius on his left. Exotic perfumes assaulted Paynter's nostrils. Wild, pagan, erotically stimulating music wailed from the frenzied players streaming their perspiration soaked bodies through ritual contortions. Blood grew hot. Desires quickened. Paynter lifted his microphone, licked his lips fiercely, bellowed:

"Forward, men! To the sack!"

In the theatre, Bigelow Paynter tensed himself for the big moment of the evening. These sensi-stories worked to a formula; build up the character you were most feeling like, following the line suggested by your own unconscious, set the scene—and, incidentally, show you your own prevailing attitude of mind projected into that character's action—and then have a slap-bang good time sublimating your desires. The violence Paynter had gone through had worked off his grudge against the world. He would have worried about the hanging sequence if he'd had time; as it was, he was far too busy swinging two swords and cutting his way through ranks of huge silent soldiers to concern himself over anything else.

Bedlam had broken out. Leaping hounds of destruction poured from archways and corridors. A boarding party crashed through the roof. Jaspar Pentland's gigantic warrior-slaves met this first rush of Paynter's men, they slashed and hacked in remorseless fury. Severed limbs twitched away from shattered bodies. Blood smoked hot along the furs and silks.

Black Captain Paynter was in the forefront of the attack, his grim fighting smile, feared all along the spaceways, on his lips, cool calm, a fighting demon supremely in command of the situation.

"Take that party over there!" he shouted, gesturing with his two swords. Bright drops of blood flew from them. He watched his orders obeyed, busily broke up a melee before him, his swords creating a swathe of destruction wherever he went. The battle lust carried him laughing and shouting through that epic fight. They'd sing ballads of this round the lonely outposts among the stars! How Black Captain Paynter infiltrated and took the fabulous palace of his rival, Three-eyed Jaspar Pentland. Ballads would be sung as long as men bridged the dark spaces between the worlds.

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But—where was Three-eyed Jaspar?

Snarling—it felt good to be able to vent his hatred of the world in a lusty, dramatic snarl—Paynter searched the palace chamber, sent his men to find his enemy. The lissome slave girl, her body loaded with quickly plundered jewelry, swept towards him from the throng. Shouts filled the chamber as men tore at heavy hangings, overturned tables and divans, toppled racks of weapons.

"Here, Captain Paynter," cried the girl. "A cup for the victor!"

Laughing deep in his throat, Paynter seized the cup, drained it and flung it from him. He took the girl and implanted a fiery kiss on her willing lips. As a reprise it was quite good.

Rapidly his men rebuilt the throne whereon Jaspar Pentland had been wont to sit. They heaped the looted treasures around his feet. Trembling girls, dragged from the harem, were hurled cowering among the treasure. His men brought Three-eyed Jasper, chained and blood-covered, to stand and taunt him before their captain.

Swords hissed from scabbards, raised on high; a mighty shout rent the air of the palace.

"Hail Black Captain Paynter!"

Which wasn't half bad, Bigelow Paynter in his cheap seat realized with a luxurious sense of completeness.

The din was overwhelming; it beat back from the walls, sent the frightened girls shuddering on the floor, filled Three-eyed Jaspar's dark soul with dread and roused Paynter's followers to fresh heights of impassioned loyalty. They demonstrated violently around the room, chanting, creating a pulse-quickening scene to any man who was lucky enough to be lord of all this bedlam.

Bigelow Paynter let out a low sigh of pure contentment. This was living! This was what he really was, if he hadn't been caught in the toils of industry; his own dream wish fulfillment was unfolding before him—the fleapit theatre was really giving his money's worth now.

Outside in the foyer of the theatre Lottie was in earnest conversation with the manager. Although impressed by her, he was at first reluctant, then amused. Finally, he laughed and patted Lottie's arm understandingly. He began to give careful instructions to the projectionists taping out the synthetic dreams to the stupified customers, correlating subconscious desire into the trash fed them. Lottie began to undress.

Gradually, in the bacchantic scene unreeling to all Payn-

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ter's senses, a dilated calm descended on the pirates in the hall. They began to pair off with slave girls. Food; outrageously expensive dishes of fantastic complexity were carried in by Jaspar's cooks. Wine; amphorae and space-bottles of rare vintages were seized and upended. An orgy of eating and drinking began, with Black Captain Paynter beaming down upon it all, luscious girls hanging onto his arm and feeding him titbits from the royal larders.

"Where's that jackal Jaspar?" he yelled hugely, tearing at the wing of a Denebian turkey. Rich fat smeared his mouth. "Bring the cur to me!"

Jaspar was dragged across the floor, leaving a trail of brilliant blood stains. His chains jangled. His third eye—a huge, artificially grown crystal embedded in his forehead connected directly with his pineal eye and which gave him, men said, vision over the events of the future—was smeared with blood and sweat. Paynter guffawed at the sight. There was something symbolic, something he could not quite grasp, in that foul obliteration of the eye that could see the future. And, evidently, the story was a legend. He could savour to the full his victory over this formidable opponent.

A haunting, tingling, spine-chilling jingling of ankle bells arrested Captain Paynter. His dark brows swept down. He watched gloweringly the woman who danced into the flame herself, her voluptuous body sheathed in a single shadow ribbed mesh of synthi-silk, her eyes taking the smoky glimmer around and fashioning it into twin hypnotic lamps of unholy desire. She abandoned herself to the demands of the dance. She was a flower of flame, pirouetting, swaying, now soft and delicate, now loud and challenging, bringing the hot blood pounding to his temples. She placed tiny white feet delicately among the sprawled pirates and their women. Like a mesmeric butterfly, she danced nearer the throne, nearer Jaspar, a wafting cloud of incense stroking her with feathers of perfume.

A veil fluttered free, steamed away, dropped to the floor in a mist of colour. A second followed. The pirates sat up. Their eyes gleamed. They began to shout, to beat the time, to shrill coarse demands that served merely to accentuate the white passion of the woman's dance.

To Captain Paynter she was all woman, she was all the desires incarnate in one body, tantalising, mocking, promising and withholding, with a low throaty laugh. In the centre of his rapt attention, as another veil floated delicately from the woman's glowing arms, he shot a quick, suspicious look at Jaspar in his

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chains. He was beginning to get the picture.

He chuckled. There was a historical parallel. This woman must be a harem girl who had not found favour with Jaspar and now was dancing to receive a favour from the victorious captain; then she would demand Jaspar's head on a charger. This was worth all the money he'd paid for a seat; a smile touched his lips and he lay back, allowing the feeling of power to surge through him like a liquid fire.

At last, when the dance was done and the high domed chamber was a b e d l a m of shouts and calls of approval and shrill yelps of frenzied desire, the masked girl bowed low before him, covering herself, supplicating.

"Any wish is yours," Paynter boomed, ready to order the executioner f o r w a r d. He laughed in his beard at Jaspar. And then his eyes narrowed.

There was a change about his prisoner. The third eye was no longer visible, the man's facial structure had undergone a remarkable transformation and he looked like someone Paynter knew well, a man who had always irritated him, a man from the other world. Pentland! The very name, and he had overlooked it. President of Mercury Spacers, his boss, the man he dare not ask for a rise. This was a magnificent sequence! By the beard of the Comet—there had been a master hand at work designing this dream world!

Paynter took some time to realize that he was, in sober truth, living merely in a dream world. He had forgotten it completely, thoroughly carried away by the pirates' attack and the fighting, the debauchery and this woman's lazily brilliant dance of passion. The knowledge touched his mind lightly and was thrust down again under the weight of the illusion. Once again, where he belonged, he was Black Captain Paynter, King of the Spaceways.

The woman sidled closer, moving her hips with the sinuous grace of a panther. A scent of musk made his head whirl. She was speaking to him, and the illogic of her demand brought him wrathfully upright on the pile of cushions.

"You have granted me any wish. You will spare me this man's life."

"No, by the blood of the sun, you shall not have him!"

"The great Captain Paynter's word is then a broken jet tube, worthless. What will be said about you now around the outposts b e t w e e n the stars?" She was icily contemptuous, blazingly angry.

"If I spare him, he will plan revenge. My life will always be in danger."

"That is unusual?" Her throaty laugh goaded him.

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"No, by heaven! You are right. What do I care for the poor schemes of any rival? Take him away." He swung stormily on Jasper. "If you cross my path again, Pentland, beware. I'll slit your gizzard!"

The fat man, now possessed of his full complement of three eyes and yet still uncannily like some other man of the further world, crawled, sobbing, towards the veiled woman. She had kept her face covered during the entire revelation of the dance. Now the man she had saved slobbered over her feet.

"Enough of that!" Paynter rose to his feet, women and food sliding untidily to the rugs beneath. "She's more to do yet, before she earns her freedom! Get out of here, you fat slob!"

Pentland scuttled for the door, goaded by the jeers of Paynter's men. The veiled dancing woman undulated up the steps towards the throne. She appeared perfectly composed amidst all the pagan scene. Paynter awaited her with open arms and a lecherous grin.

She evaded his clutching arms with a sinuous movement, sank down on the cushions. Guffawing loudly, he seized her masking veil. Her magnificent body stiffened.

"Now, my mystery woman, my lovely gazelle, my oxygen on the Moon—now we'll find out who you are."

Bigelow Paynter's hand tore downwards. He sat bolt upright in the seat. He glared ahead into his own private, paid-for dream world and his cheeks went scarlet and then white. His feelings were a chaos of disorder, of fear, of anger at being cheated—of smallness.

"Lottie!" he screamed. "Lottie! How did you get here?"

"Ah," Lottie fluttered her eyelashes in a practised coquettish come-on. "The great and all-powerful Black Captain Paynter's name has reached even unto the backwater planets. You are very well known on Earth."

"Come off it, Lottie!" Paynter's voice rose to breaking point. He was trembling all over.

"What is the matter, O noble captain? Why are you so distraught? And,"—Lottie said viciously—"what exactly did you plan to do with me on your golden throne?"

Paynter's mind shied away from that. He shouted in sudden, irrational rage that had to find a target: "What did you let that Pentland get away for? What does he mean to you, hey?" he snapped in abrupt panicky suspicion.

"Jealous my puissant Lord of Space?" She tinkled laughter. "Do not fear—I dance for the victor. The vanquished must go to the wall."

"Where'd you learn all this

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fancy talk?" grumbled Paynter. "And what in blazes are you doing here? You can't be here. It's impossible," he finished weakly.

"You're scared of Pentland, Bigelow, dead scared."

Something came over Bigelow Paynter then. It may have been the sight of his wife dressed as she was, or it may have been the remembered triumph over Pentland, his boss; whatever it was he lurched drunkenly to his feet, dragging his rapier free of the scabbard. This was his dream-world. Other people intruded at their peril.

"It's a lie!" he thundered. "Captain Paynter, the King of the Spaceways, is afraid of nothing, living or dead." His red mouth bawled curses. "No-one calls me a coward. Ho! Guards! Take me this woman to the cells and chastise her first, before she walks the hyperspace plank."

Lottie, usually so dull and uninteresting, had become a wild-flower of passion. Most odd. Unless she flew into one of her paddies he would not have known she had a drop of blood in her veins; yet she had transformed herself into this gorgeous piece of pulchritude that had danced to set his brain on fire. He swung on the guards.

"All right, you spaceswabs! Leave her! She'll dance some more, before she walks the plank."

As the exciting strains of delirious music burst over the chamber Paynter struggled to exercise his own will over this strangely disordered world of men, space—and women.

She stood there, pale, intense, her veils drooping in straight, simple folds to the floor. She was alone in all that roaring host. Lifting her face, she smiled at him as the flower smiles at the sun. He poised, waiting for something that he could not explain. Expecting a miracle—

At that precise instant the roof caved in, the palace was hidden in a haze of dust and mortar, women screamed. The Interstellar Police had arrived.

Immediately swords flickered in the gloom, ruddy flames of blasters licked long tongues of familiar destruction. The pirates surged joyously into action, cutting and hewing, meeting the black-clad ranks of the police in solid shock. Irresolutely on his throne he—Black Captain Paynter?—stood to watch. His own rapier was in his hand, the trusty steel that had slit the throat of many a good man. He extended his left hand, fingers parted, rings ablaze, and stared at it. Through the bars of his fingers he could see his wife, slim and proud, standing there while the battle raged about her. The battle the

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theatre had provided to suit his emotions and psychological need. He had the uncomfortable feeling that the machine was late.

With that familiar smile of regal disdain on his lips, his cloth of gold cloak falling in precise, military folds from the gigantic jewel on his shoulder, with his fabulous rapier in his hand among all the din and confusion of the sack of a palace, Captain Paynter reached out a steady hand that had for a long instant been extended in recognised comprehension and tore off the spectacles, ripped out the electrodes, stumbled dazed and sobbing from the sensitheatre seat.

He went stumbling in the gloom through the exit into the foyer. Was it all a cosmic Freudian slip of conscience? A guilt complex stemming from his fear of asking for that raise Lottie had been nagging for? A fear of Pentland?

Nagging? Fear? When she'd danced to set the blood on fire? When he'd sent Pentland crawling and cowering in abject terror?

Bigelow Paynter let out a deep, shaky breath. He pushed wide through the swing doors.

He collided with his wife, running flushed from the projectionists' booth. She was still buttoning her synthivelour coat.

He grabbed her. "Lottie! You scheming little minx! So you twisted the manager round your finger and loused up my show, hey? C'mere!" He planted a huge kiss on her moist lips. She squirmed, then surrendered, oblivious to the publicity of the deed.

"By the beard of the comet!" Paynter roared. "I'm going to see Pentland tomorrow! And I'll get my raise." He thrust a roughly familiar hand around Lottie's waist and they pranced into the street. "And, Lottie, you bundle of electricity, the next time you nag I'll whip you till you dance!"

Lottie tried to speak, a growing wonder clouding her mind. This was her husband? What had happened to him when she had insinuated herself into his private dream-world and rigged the semblance of Pentland? She stared at him and there was something of awe in her eyes.

"Your scheme worked well," Paynter was saying, enjoying the newly-burst well-springs of power within him. "Very well indeed."

He didn't need to add: "By the beard of the comet." He could save that for when he eventually did become the President of Mercury Spacers. And Lottie sighed, and made up her mind to take the luxury this new man could bring her; in a way, it was better like this.

It was always better to dance than to nag.

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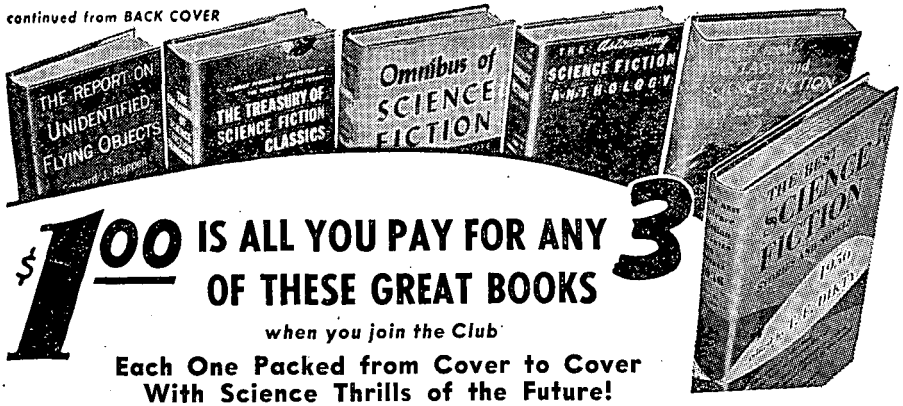
continued from BACK COVER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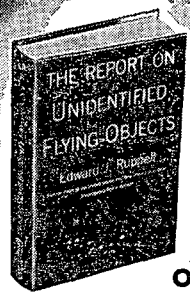

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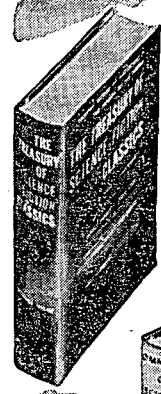

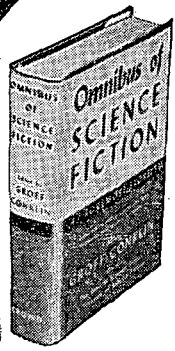

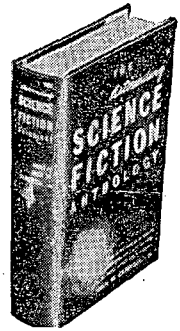

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